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THE INDEPENDENT

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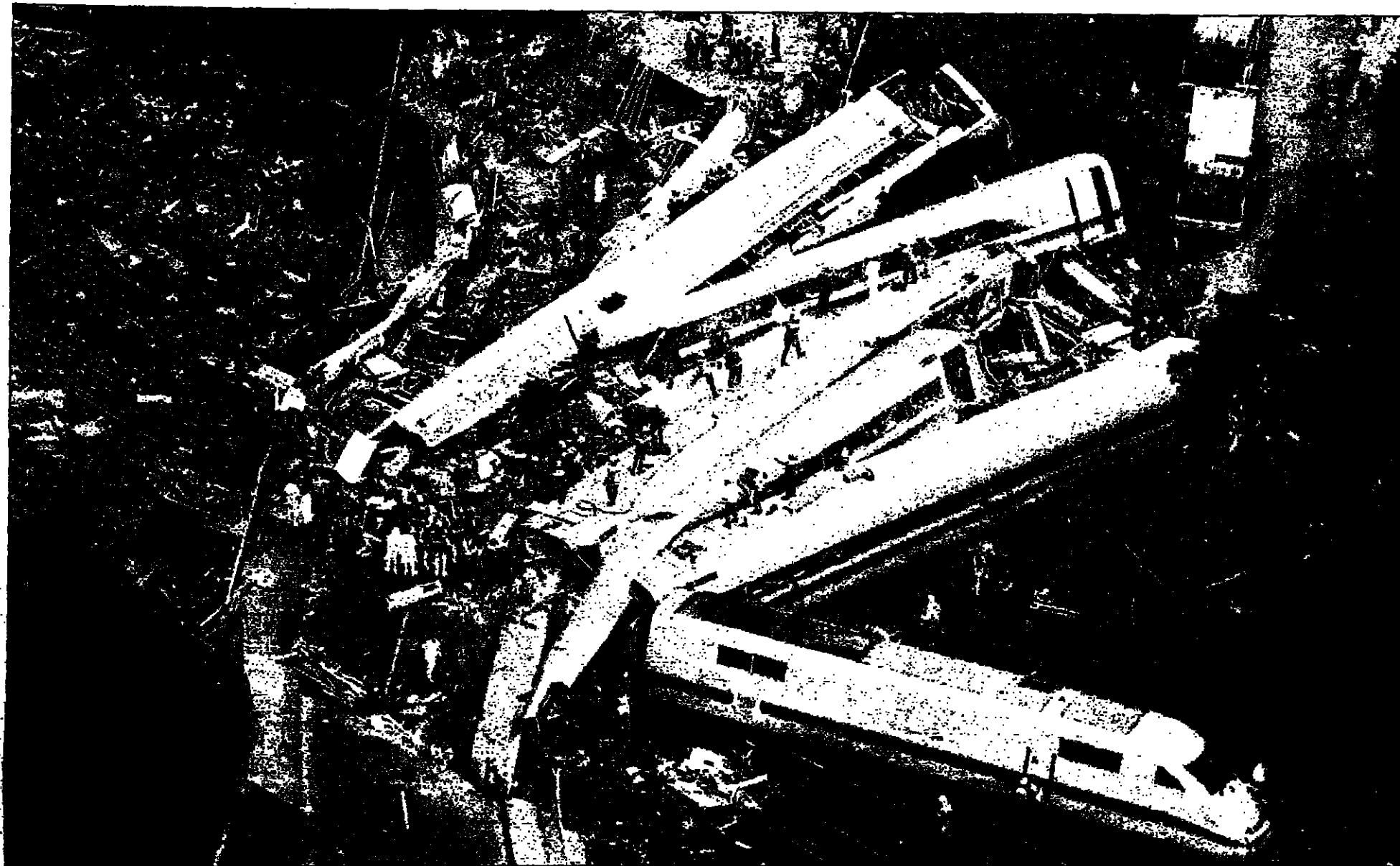
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Disaster at 125mph: 80 dead

By James Roberts

AT LEAST 80 people died and 200 were seriously injured yesterday when Germany's fastest train met with disaster after 13 of its coaches buckled into an overhead bridge.

Several hours after the crash, and with scores of injured still trapped in the horrifying crush of wreckage, it was still unclear how the disaster happened. The Inter City Express was travelling at 125mph towards the station in Eschede, a small town 35 miles north of Hanover, on its journey from Munich to Hamburg, when, according to eyewitness reports, a car plunged off the road bridge that passed over the track, and



Rescue workers search through the wreckage of the train and bridge near the town of Eschede in northern Germany

Photograph: Bild-Zeitung

those trapped inside could be reached. One fire fighter said they were afraid how many children were still buried in the wreckage, which was spread out along the four straight tracks for several hundred yards.

"I was in the kitchen peeling potatoes when I heard a train go by faster than ever before," said Hannelore Bonkewitz. "Then I heard a huge bang. I ran outside and saw a giant cloud of smoke."

"I ran out and saw all the immense suffering," she added. "The rescue workers asked me to get blankets. I brought all the blankets and sheets that I own. I saw a man trying to climb out of the train. His hands were covered with blood. No one else could get out."

"It was awful. I saw a small girl who had been badly hurt being treated. It was horrible," said Gerd Knoop, a 57-year-old rescue worker, as tears began to stream down his cheeks.

Walter Stroetmann, another worker, said he had never seen anything like it. "This shakes me to the core," he said. "I had to collect body parts. Legs and arms. They were from men, women and children."

"We are going to try to lift the bridge to find survivors," said one firefighter. "We can't give up hope of finding anyone who may still be alive."

"I have to admit that this is affecting me very much," said Juergen Frohns, a spokesman at the scene for German Railways, trying to fight back tears. "I couldn't bear to look at all the dead people."

The German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, who arrived in Italy yesterday for talks with the Prime Minister, Romano Prodi, made no immediate comment on the crash.

Inside

**Silent carnage
among the wild
roses.**

**Anatomy of a
disaster.**

Pages 14 and 15

hit one of the first carriages. The nose of the train had cleared the bridge, but 13 carriages were derailed, jackknifed, and smashed upwards into the road.

However a police spokesman, Joachim Lindenberg, offered a different account, saying the train had been forced upwards into the overpass with sudden massive force, and that a car parked on the road had been brought plunging on to the tracks. The car, he said, belonged to a rail employee who was working along the tracks. A car was found under the wreckage,

so it was expected that investigators would be able to establish how the first impact occurred. Further evidence emerged from a survivor, who had been travelling in the second carriage.

Wolf Schilbener said that two minutes before the accident he had heard "a tremendous rattling and shaking" in the train. "There was a huge cloud of smoke and my first thought

was how do I get out," he said. "The window was cracked but there was a stone and I used that to break it open further. Thank god, a conductor came past at that time and he pulled me out.

When I saw what had happened I realised how lucky I had been to get out at all."

The disaster happened at 11 o'clock under bright blue skies on a warm spring morning. Afterwards, a thick cloud of dust hung over the tracks, and an eerie silence, broken by the wail of ambulance sirens and helicopters. More than 800 rescue workers, among them 20 British

soldiers and army doctors from a nearby base at Celle, battled to free dead and injured from the mangled white carriages. A crane lifted massive chunks of concrete off the cars so that

Blair chided by Labour MP

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

THE choreography of the Commons, with Labour MPs tamely dancing to the tune of ministers and whips, was attacked by a brave Government backbencher last night.

Andrew Mackinlay, Labour MP for Thurrock, attracted roars of support from across the House when he tackled Tony Blair during Prime Minister's question time yesterday - urging him to endorse greater independence among his own MPs.

Defying current Commons customs, Mr Mackinlay reminded Mr Blair how they had explored the "fawning, obsequious, soft-ball, well-rehearsed, planted questions" that Tory MPs put to John Major when he was Prime Minister.

He then challenged Mr Blair to "encourage, rather than discourage, loyal Labour backbenchers who wish to seek and to provide scrutiny and accountability in this place, without fear or favour and without partial affection."

The Prime Minister replied: "Can I say I fully respect my honourable friend's independence of mind, and I shall do my very best to make sure he retains it."

That was taken by some cynical MPs as a broad hint that he would never offer Mr Mackinlay a ministerial job, and the MP later told *The Independent* that people would have to make their own minds up about the answer.

"I thought it was rather unusual," Mr Mackinlay said. "The Prime Minister was clearly having to weigh up every word."

But he did say: "I think there is a problem of the choreography of the Commons. More and more is being programmed and planned by the two frontbenches, and Parliament is being diminished by it."

He was concerned about the ability of select committees to act as independent checks on the executive, but he said the greatest example of the parliamentary chorus line came during Commons question times.

"What happens with questions? Every day, MPs enter a



Andrew Mackinlay warned of 'fawning, planted questions'

raffle to put questions to ministers or the Prime Minister, two weeks in advance. Every day, parliamentary private secretaries - ministers' political assistants - hawk around pro forma questions which ministers want to be asked.

"MPs sign these, and they are put in, these loaded, planted, soft questions. "I should have thought that on a salary of £44,000 a year, it is not unreasonable to expect MPs to be the architects and authors of their own questions."

"We need to have a signal," he said. "If a Prime Minister is confident, he should not fear legitimate criticism and probing, and that was what I was inviting the Prime Minister to signal today."

Parliamentary sketch, page 8

Class size pledge 'won't work'

By Judith Judd
Education Editor

ONE OF the Government's main election pledges - cuts in class sizes - will not be met unless thousands more pupils are taught in mixed-age classes, says a report published today.

The 70-page study from consultants Coopers & Lybrand also predicts that the Prime Minister's promise to cut infant class sizes to a maximum of 30 by the end of this Parliament will restrict parents' choice of school.

Yesterday, the Office for Standards in Education

(Ofsted) warned that mixed-age classes were more difficult to teach and might jeopardise the Government's new literacy hour.

More classes of children of different ages will transform the way primary schools are organised in many places, says the report. At present just under a quarter of infants are in mixed-age classes which are generally unpopular with parents.

The report examines different ways in which local education authorities can achieve the reductions being demanded by the Government. Half of pri-

mary schools have one oversized infant class. It argues: "In our view the policy of reducing class sizes is likely to result in a rise in the incidence of mixed-age classes in primary schools. In turn, this is likely to generate a debate about the advantages and disadvantages of mixed age teaching and the additional demands it may place on schools."

A spokesman for Ofsted said: "Our view is that it is more difficult to teach mixed-age classes partly because of the range of attainment and because of the range of emotional

development. They will also make it more difficult to do the whole-class teaching required for the literacy hour."

The report, commissioned by the Local Government Association, suggests that other ways of reducing class size will limit parents' choice of school. More than half of all classes with 30 or more pupils are the result of parental appeals over admissions.

To provide an extra class in each school with an oversized class would be prohibitively expensive, but to provide extra classes only in some schools in an area might cut across

parental choice. The cheapest and quickest solution would be to use empty places in less popular schools but that, too, would restrict parents' choice.

Graham Lane, the association's chairman, who will meet ministers today, said: "The Government must take note of this document and its practical, detailed issues or it will not deliver its election pledge. There is sufficient money in the system but ministers need to address the problems of mixed-age schooling and admission appeals."

Leading article, page 20
Education, in The Eye

Does skull hold secret of the missing link?

By David Keys
Archaeology Correspondent

SCIENTISTS in Africa may have uncovered the origins of our species of humanity - *Homo sapiens*.

Excavations in Eritrea in north-east Africa have unearthed the earliest human remains to display any specific *Homo sapiens* characteristics.

The find - a skull dating

from one million years ago - appears to be from the crucial hitherto undiscovered evolutionary phase in which our ape-man ancestors developed into an ancestral version of *Homo sapiens*.

The early date of one million BC will surprise many human evolution specialists who were expecting the changeover from ape-man to ancestral forms of our own species to have occurred

a good 300,000 years later. The new discovery therefore suggests that *Homo sapiens* was beginning to evolve out of earlier hominid forms some time before 1,000,000BC - perhaps between 1.2 and 1.1 million years ago.

The skull - unearthed by Italian paleontologist Ernesto Abbate - has facial bone and some skull shape characteristics which are associated with early

Homo sapiens, but has many other characteristics which are typical of early *Homo sapiens*'s ape man *Homo erectus* forebears.

Over the past 5,000,000 years up to 20 different species of human have existed. At the time that the Eritrean individual was alive there were at least two or three species in existence. Our species *Homo sapiens* is simply the sole survivor.

In brief

Hope for jailed pair
Tony Blair has raised hopes that two soldiers jailed for shooting a teenager in Ulster could be freed. Page 8

Crime soars in city
Violent crimes have risen by 50 per cent and rapes by a third in the past year in Manchester. Page 11



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"More bodies found behind bank till."

At Abbey National, our staff don't take their lunch hour between 12.30 and 1.30. A little good news for the front page.

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TOMORROW

■ **In the Eye**
28 pages of film
and music—
including:

■ **Cut!**
The Censorship
Roadshow comes
to town

■ **Sing**
yourself horse
Rock stars who
play cowboys

■ **China crisis**
Richard Gere
causes Oriental
upsets



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Recycled paper made up
41.4% of the raw material for
UK newspapers in the
first half of 1997.

Investigators at Dounreay nuclear complex accept incredible explanation for missing material

Lost in the accounts – 170kgs of uranium

By Charles Arthur
Science and Technology Editor

A SIMPLE explanation was offered yesterday for the disappearance from the Dounreay reprocessing plant of enough weapons-grade uranium to make eight nuclear warheads: it never existed.

Furthermore, the uranium's absence (or, if it turns up, its presence) will not affect Dounreay's future operations. The plant is already being "decommissioned" – shut down and dismantled – though its highly radioactive nature means the process will take decades.

According to a report issued by the UK Atomic Energy Authority, 170 kilograms (374 pounds) of uranium may be unaccounted for from the plant's early years of operation, between 1965 and 1968. But Dr John McKewen, chief executive of UKAEA, insisted that the huge discrepancy arose through accounting errors dealing with many small shipments.

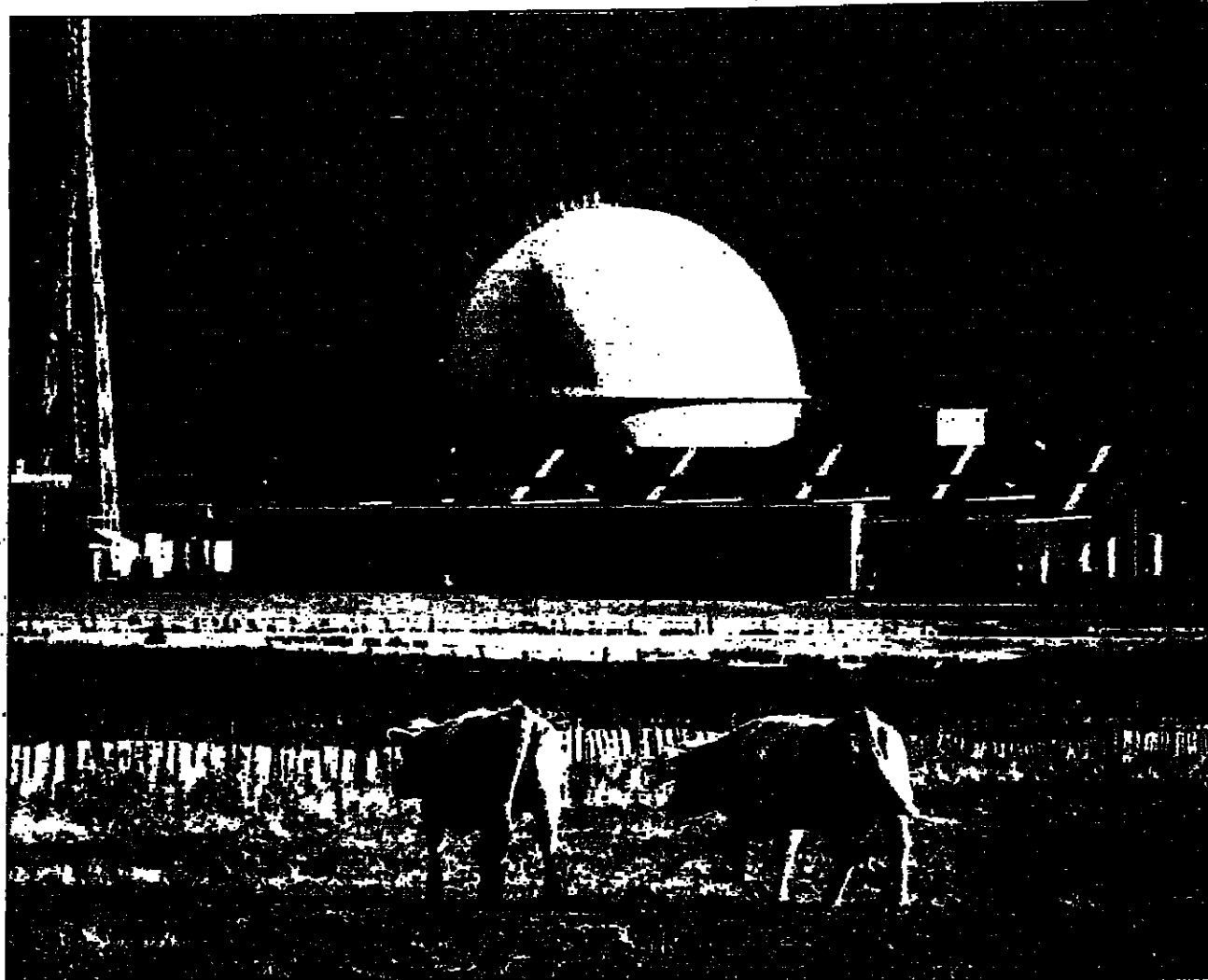
The material was not stolen, nor transferred into the UK's then-nascent nuclear weapons programme, he insisted. But if it were still there, "it would be detectable," he added. Instead, an overestimate of just 1 per cent of the amount arriving

from other sources would explain the discrepancy, he said. Despite appearing incredible, the explanation was accepted yesterday by representatives for the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII), which has nine inspectors on the site just starting a three-week audit of management practices and controls.

The NII has the power to withdraw Dounreay's licence to operate as a nuclear facility, and has already forbidden it to carry out reprocessing work until a number of faults are cleared and ageing equipment improved. As a result, the plant is now simply ticking over. The latest news will not affect that.

"These are totally historic figures from the 1960s," said a spokesman for the NII yesterday. "The figure emerges from an inventory of what is in the waste shaft on the site. It's a paper discrepancy, there may have been no real loss of fuel." The "missing" material – known as MUR, or "material unaccounted for" – might also lie in areas of the plant which have been shut down and are awaiting decommissioning.

Within the nearby town of Thurso, which Dounreay has a workforce of 1,400 is the main employer, the reaction to



The Dounreay Nuclear Reprocessing Plant where 170kg of uranium was reported to have gone missing Photograph: PA

yesterday's news was one of resignation. But it was mixed with pleasure at the news that a battery factory is soon to start up, creating more than 100 jobs in the coming years. It is the result of a deal between two major Japanese corporations and AEA Technology – ironically, a spin-off company from the UKAEA, which operates Dounreay.

But the nuclear plant has many local defenders. "They may have had crises at that plant, but say this for them, they have never had a fatal accident," said Elizabeth Macdonald, a local councillor in Thurso who has lived in the town since

Dounreay was being built. "It has never had a Piper Alpha disaster. If you go to the coal mines or the gas industry's record then I think you would have to say it's safer than those others."

"They have to go back to the Sixties to find these faults. But Dounreay was put here as an experimental plant. I think that they learnt as they went along, so I'm sure that they made some mistakes. But I think that if they hadn't struck oil in the North Sea, then Dounreay would still be working."

However, Lorraine Mann, of the pressure group Scotland Against Nuclear Dumping, called Dr McKewen's explanation

"patronising" and said that "total incompetence is matched by complete complacency". For the Scottish National Party, Roseanna Cunningham said: "We are now in the ludicrous situation where we are hoping the uranium was used to make British atom bombs, because the alternatives are even harder to stomach."

The UKAEA report aimed to be a "worst-case" view of the possible contents of the waste disposal shaft at the site. Originally intended to hold radioactive and other waste materials indefinitely, the shaft is 220 feet deep and contains an estimated 15,000 tonnes of

waste, including uranium and plutonium mixtures, as well as metal, clothes and other rubbish. It was seriously damaged in 1977 when there was an explosion inside it, reckoned to be caused by sodium and potassium coming into contact with water.

Scientists now plan to spend about £500 million on freezing and then removing the shaft and its contents before vitrifying them for long-term storage.

It will probably be seven years before anything is removed. The NII, which will oversee the work, says: "We don't set time limits. We just make sure that they have to do it safely."

Built as the power station of the future, now its time has past

DOUNREAY was built in the 1950s by a government eager to make the most of a promising new technology – nuclear power.

The discovery that nuclear reactors could actually create their own fuel while they generated electricity seemed to be the ultimate free energy lunch.

But scientists assured ministers that "fast breeder" reactors, which would generate high-quality radioactive materials as part of their chain reaction, were the future.

The first British one was sited on the windswept far north coast of Scotland, about 40 miles west of John o'Groats.

Things began going wrong with monotonous regularity. The Sodium-cooled fast reactor, completed in 1959, caught fire and overheated a number of times.

A materials testing reactor was shut down in 1967 due to a major fuel leak. And in 1977 the waste shaft – tunnelled into

the rock, which was expected to act as a store for nuclear left-overs indefinitely – blew off its cover. A concrete plug was installed, but the sea is eroding the rock and the race is on to empty the shaft before the water gets in.

Since 1989, when the Conservatives killed off the mori-

bund fast breeder programme, Dounreay has been limping towards inevitable shutdown. While it has won a few reprocessing contracts – the latest being the controversial five kilograms of reactor fuel from Georgia – its closure will come early next century.

But crises still occur. In the

past two years radioactivity has been found on a site director's chair, on the nearby beach, and on the road.

Three employees were found to have inhaled or swallowed radioactive particles which took them over the annual allowed dose. (The site managers were fined).

Strike threat to Test Match

By Janine Gibson
and Barrie Clement

THE BBC's live coverage of the First Test Match against South Africa today may be disrupted by a strike of 6,500 members of the broadcasting union, Bectu. Test cricket is likely to be the first sporting event to suffer from a series of 24-hour stoppages planned by Bectu which will begin today despite yesterday's talks with the BBC management.

The BBC has scheduled all-day live coverage of the Test across both BBC1 and 2.

Disruption of coverage of the match at Edgbaston could be the beginning of a series of strikes which seem certain to affect the BBC's summer of sport, including preparations for the World Cup coverage.

Bectu expects the strike action to interfere with all live radio and television programmes today, but is specifically targeting high-profile sporting events.

This first day of action was chosen by Bectu to affect live coverage of the Test match and the setting-up of studios in Paris for the World Cup.

The shooting of location dramas, including *EastEnders* is also expected to be curtailed. Tube travellers in London are facing a summer of strikes after members of the RMT union voted for industrial action.

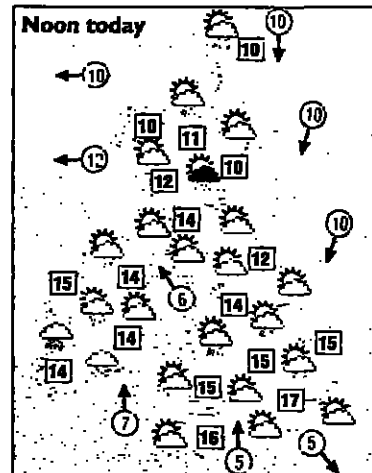
The planned action by 7,000 members of the RMT union, which could cause disruption from next Thursday, is in protest at the Deputy Prime Minister's scheme for partial privatisation of the system.

Despite assurances from John Prescott about employees' pay and conditions under the new regime, RMT members voted by more than five to one to take action.

Leaders of the union will decide today the precise timing of strikes, but they could begin in a week's time and are expected to cause considerable delays and cancellations.

It is understood that the stoppages would last a minimum of 24 hours.

WEATHER



Scotland will have sunny spells and scattered showers. Northern and eastern coasts will be rather cool. Northern Ireland and northern England will also be cool and, after a mainly dry start there may be a few showers, some of them heavy. The rest of the country will be warmer with spells of sunshine, but there will be a risk of showers. However, most of the showers will be light and much of the south will stay dry all day.

Outlook for the next few days
Tomorrow will be warmer, particularly in the south. Northern Ireland and western Scotland will be cloudy with some light rain, but elsewhere it should be warm, dry and sunny. However there will be a risk of thundery showers in the south-east later. Northern Ireland and western Scotland will be cloudy on Saturday with further rain at times. The rest of the country will be drier and brighter but it will be quite cool in the east.

British Isles weather

Most recent available figures at noon local time
C: Sunny; S: Sunny; Sh: Showers; Ss: Snow; T: Thunder

Abertillery	C 10.50	Glasgow	Sh 15.59
Alford	C 9.48	Inverness	Sh 10.50
Ayr	C 13.55	Isle of Skye	C 17.63
Belfast	C 10.50	Isle of Skye	C 14.57
Birmingham	C 17.63	Jersey	C 16.61
Blackpool	Dr 12.54	Liverpool	C 14.57
Bournemouth	C 16.61	London	Sh 16.61
Brighton	Sh 15.59	Manchester	C 12.54
Bristol	Sh 14.57	Newcastle	C 9.48
Cardiff	C 16.61	Oxford	Sh 13.55
Cardle	R 10.50	Plymouth	C 15.59
Dover	C 17.63	Scarborough	Dr 9.48
Edinburgh	C 11.52	Southampton	C 16.61
Exeter	C 12.54	Stornoway	C 8.46
Glasgow	C 12.54	York	R 9.48

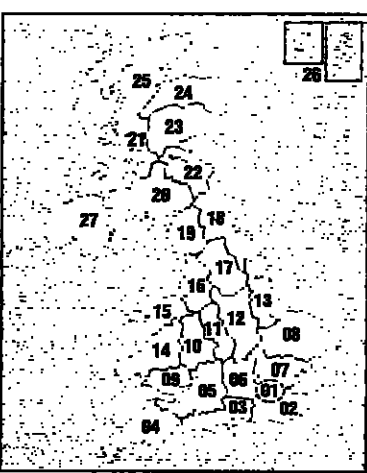
Air quality and Pollen

Yesterday's readings

	PM10	PM10	PM10	PM10	PM10
London	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod
S. England	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod
Wales	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod
N. England	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod
Scotland	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod
N. Ireland	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod

Out and about with AA Roadwatch

Call 0336 401777 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT).



INDEPENDENT Weatherline

For the latest forecasts call 0891 50009 followed by the two digits for your area indicated by the above map. Source: The Met Office. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT).

	AM	HT	PM	HT
London	10.08	6.0	22.34	5.8
Liverpool	07.39	7.5	20.21	7.5
Avonmouth	03.04	10.0	15.48	10.0
Hull (Albert Dock)	02.42	6.9	14.53	7.1
Greenock	08.20	2.8	21.54	2.7
Dun Laoghaire	08.24	3.5	21.01	3.4

Lighting-up times

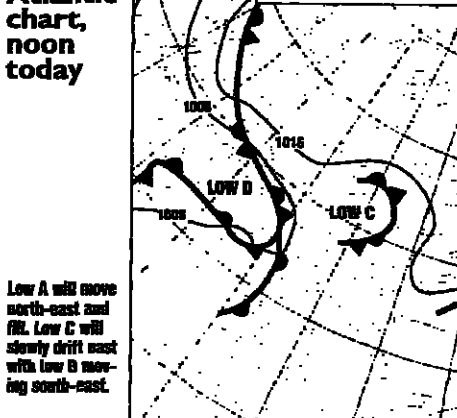
Belfast	21.52	to	04.52
Birmingham	21.23	to	04.48
Bristol	21.21	to	04.56
Cardiff	21.54	to	04.36
Edinburgh	21.11	to	04.47
London	21.31	to	04.44
Manchester	21.37	to	04.32
Newcastle			

World weather

Most recent available figures at noon local time

Abertillery	C 10.50	Glasgow	Sh 15.59
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Ayr	C 13.55	Isle of Skye	C 17.63
Belfast	C 10.50	Isle of Skye	C 14.57
Birmingham	C 17.63	Jersey	C 16.61
Blackpool	Dr 12.54	Liverpool	C 14.57
Bournemouth	C 16.61	London	Sh 16.61
Brighton	Sh 15.59	Manchester	C 12.54
Bristol	Sh 14.57	Newcastle	C 9.48
Cardiff	C 16.61	Oxford	Sh 13.55
Cardle	R 10.50	Plymouth	C 15.59
Dover	C 17.63	Scarborough	Dr 9.48
Edinburgh	C 11.52	Southampton	C 16.61
Exeter	C 12.54	Stornoway	C 8.46
Glasgow	C 12.54	York	R 9.48

Atlantic chart, noon today



MICHAEL HANLON WEATHER WISE

LAST SUMMER the smog got so bad in Paris that the city authorities had to ban half the city's cars on alternate days. This year, Athens begins an experiment in staggering the hours at which schools, banks and shops open, in an attempt to reduce rush-hour smog peaks. And last week in Mexico City the pollution was so bad that 1.7 million cars were banned on Saturday.

In each of these places, very special factors combine to push levels of air pollution far above that expected for a city of comparable size with comparable numbers of vehicles. In Paris, the air quality has been dealt a hammer blow by the low taxes imposed on diesel fuel – a policy designed to favour French car manufacturers, which have invested heavily in diesel technology.

In the Greek capital, a city ringed by smog-trapping mountains and with a humid and hot summer climate, tens of thousands of old vehicles are a legacy of the Greek government's policy of taxing cleaner new cars at sky-high rates.

In Mexico City, like the one-time smog capital of the world, Los Angeles, the geography is again largely to blame – a mountainous barrier to dispersion of pollution is exacerbated by a warm, dry and sunny climate.

Smog is usually far less of a problem in British cities. The dominant blustery winds from the west usually blow the polluting gases away before the sun can work its photochemical mischief on the sulphur and nitrogen compounds emitted by exhausts.

But in very hot summers air pollution can hit danger levels in central London, and the culprit is largely the capital's diesel-powered buses, taxis and trucks. It isn't until these vehicles are driven off the road and replaced by cleaner alternatives such as LPG that we can hope to see real improvement in air quality.

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هلدا من الادل

'What a week... first it was Ginger Spice, then Gazza... and now me'

By Paul McCann
and Janine Gibson

THE *Sun*'s editor, Stuart Higgins, parted company with the newspaper yesterday amid debate about whether he jumped or was pushed.

News International, owner of the *Sun*, said in a statement that Mr Higgins had been planning to resign for some months, yet reporters on the tabloid saw him in tears when he announced what he described as his "unexpected" departure.

Flanked by his deputies Andy Coulson and Rebekah Wade, Mr Higgins, 42, told journalists that he had given a lot of leaving speeches in recent months, but had never ex-



David Yelland, new editor of the *Sun*

pected to be giving his own. "What a week," he told staff. "First Geri, then Gazza and now me."

Mr Higgins, who has been editor for five years, is to be replaced by David Yelland, currently deputy editor of the Rupert Murdoch-owned *New York Post*. Mr Yelland, 35, is a former City reporter on the *Sun* who became acquainted with Rupert Murdoch by interviewing him each year when News Corporation's results were published. He went to New York in 1993.

He also caught the media mogul's eye when he was acting editor at the *New York Post* on the night that Diana, Princess of Wales, died. Mr

Murdoch and he spent the night together on the newsroom floor making the paper up.

Friends say he is the most unlikely *Sun* editor, describing him as quiet and self-effacing. In contrast Mr Higgins, who replaced the equally flamboyant Kelvin MacKenzie, was known for a party piece that involved getting down on all fours and biting people's ankles.

Mr Higgins was dubbed "Higgy the human sponge" by Mr MacKenzie during his reign for his ability to soak up abuse. Mr MacKenzie even went so far as to put a photograph of Mr Higgins, then a relatively junior reporter, in the newspaper alongside his direct line phone number.

Readers were invited to ring and give him abuse and he received more than 1,000 calls.

Mr Higgins was renowned in Fleet Street for the strength of his royal contacts. During the acrimonious war of the press conducted by the Prince and Princess of Wales, Mr Higgins was widely believed to have a direct line to the Charles camp.

However, under Mr Higgins the *Sun* lacked the sure-footed populism that marked its heyday in the Eighties. It was forced by its owner to align with Tony Blair at the last election and has recently started to take tentative moves up-market.

It has been experimenting with new photographic styles for its topless page-three models and increasingly drops them completely. Internally there has been a debate raging about whether to end the page-three pictures permanently.

Yesterday's edition was evidence of the paper's sometimes uncertain approach. It is rumoured to have paid £130,000 to buy Paul Gascoigne's story after he was left out of the England squad and so needed to milk him as much as it could. Yesterday that meant draping him in an England flag, a *Sun* plastic hat and



Stuart Higgins, outgoing editor of the *Sun*, who says that after five years "this is the right time to make a change"

reproducing some doggerel.

There has been speculation that his fast-rising deputy, Rebekah Wade, was being groomed for Mr Higgins' job.

Piers Morgan, editor of the *Mirror*, paid tribute yesterday: "In my opinion Stuart has been

one of the most brilliant tabloid journalists of his generation. I am very surprised he has resigned. I intend to do everything in my power to give his successor a good kicking."

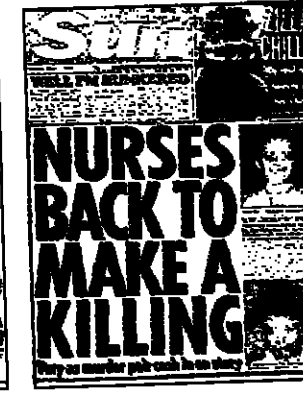
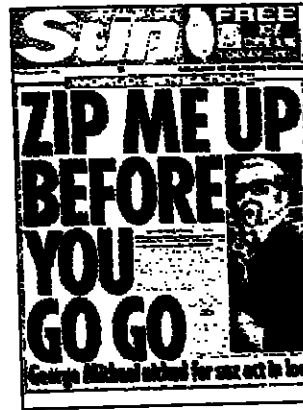
News International maintains that Mr Higgins will be

promoted to another position within the company. Rupert Murdoch paid fulsome tribute to him yesterday: "Stuart has done a terrific job throughout his years at The *Sun*. He is a brilliant newspaperman with a great future and we are sorry

he has reached this decision."

In his official statement Mr Higgins said: "It's been incredibly hard work and I have had a wonderful time, but I am certain this is the right time in my life to make a change."

Packer's target, page 17



Decline of red-tops

By Janine Gibson
Media Correspondent

EVEN Britain's number one newspaper, the *Sun*, has not been exempt from the long-term decline in red-top tabloid sales as the nation's tastes change.

Most worrying for its proprietor Rupert Murdoch, the *Sun*'s sales have been quicker than the *Mirror*'s. Whereas the *Sun*'s sales are down nearly 6 per cent year-on-year, the *Mirror* has lost 3 per cent of its circulation, according to April's figures.

The *Mirror* sells around 1.3 million fewer copies than the *Sun* but its slower rate of decline will rile the News International top brass, especially with former *Sun* editor Kelvin MacKenzie and ex-*Sun* showbiz columnist Piers Morgan at the helm of the *Mirror*. Two months ago, the *Sun* began a widespread advertising campaign

branding itself as "Dedicated to the People of Britain".

The slow decline in tabloid sales is not new. Last month, the three mass-market tabloids collectively sold 6.6 million copies. Ten years ago it was 8.2 million and 15 years ago these titles together sold 8,990,466.

The beneficiaries of the tabloid defections are the mid-market and even broadsheet newspapers. The *Daily Mail*'s circulation is over 2.2 million, 6 per cent higher than last year and within 20,000 copies a day of overtaking the *Mirror*.

The newspaper industry believes that a better-educated and more affluent population has been trading up its daily tastes. In an attempt to stem the flow, the red-tops have been trying to drag themselves upmarket: the *Mirror* now runs business pages and the *Sun* is debating whether to drop its topless page three girls.

Raunchy clichés are banned as 'Daily Star' moves up-market

FANS of the tabloid cliché are set to be disappointed from next week when the *Daily Star* is redesigned and throws out some of the most over-used terms in journalism, writes Paul McCann.

A memo circulated to staff this week bans them from using tabloid classics like "raunchy", "page-three stunner", "curry", "mad cap", "motor-mouth" and "mega".

There is also to be a moratorium on the use of the word "lesbo" and other derogatory terms for lesbians.

Instead of sticking to its strange tabloid code the newspaper's journalists are now expected to "free up" their writing style.

The list of banned words is part of a redesign package re-

searched by Philip Gould, Tony Blair's favourite pollster and adviser.

Mr Gould, who works for the owner of *The Express*, the Labour peer Lord Hollick, conducted the focus group research that has led to the new paper.

Mr Gould's influence on *The Express* Group's newspapers emerged last month when it was reported that he and Downing Street's spokesman, Alastair Campbell, colluded, to veto the appointment of Paul Routledge, the *Express*'s political editor-designate.

Mr Routledge was deemed too supportive of the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, for the taste of Downing Street.

From next Monday the



Daily Star will have a redesigned masthead, intended to make it look more like a European news magazine. It will also have more colour pages and more pictures.

The idea of the newspaper's management is to move it slightly up-market into the niche that they believe is being created by the *Mirror* and the *Sun* also moving more up-market.

"It's about getting rid of any final vestiges of the *Sunday Sport* link," one of the newspaper's journalists said yesterday.

In the Eighties the *Star*'s then owners plucked the depths of newspaper journalism by hiring the team behind the soft-porn *Sunday Sport* to revamp the *Star*.

However, in recent years it has managed to go for weeks on end having "curry" *Baywatch* "stunner", Pamela Anderson, on its front page every day.



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Connery's £57,600 for SNP

By Diana Blamires

THE ACTOR Sean Connery contributes about £4,800 a month - £57,600 in a full year - to the Scottish National Party, it disclosed yesterday.

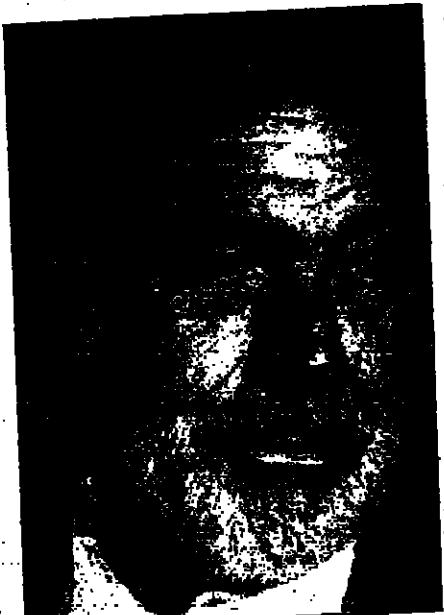
The revelation may go some way to explaining why the Scottish-born actor did not receive a knighthood when the Labour government came to power. This was despite a long-standing recommendation from the Tories that he should be honoured for his services to cinema and to Scotland. Reigniting the row, the Scottish National Party yesterday claimed there was "discrimination" by political parties against opponents.

SNP vice-convenor George Reid disclosed Connery's level of fundraising to the Committee on Standards in Public Life, taking place in Edinburgh.

"He pays this party about £4,800 a month. This is in the accounts made available to this committee. He is quite open about it," said Mr Reid.

Headed by Lord Neill, the committee is taking evidence in Scotland for two days as part of its study into the funding of political parties.

In a written submission, the SNP said: "Members of the committee will be aware of the disgraceful prejudice shown by New



Sean Connery: Knighthood nomination passed over by Labour government

Labour against the actor and SNP supporter Sean Connery with regard to an honour.

"We believe that there is a real risk that similar prejudice would be applied to persons who were identified as SNP financial supporters. Legislation on this matter

must also be effective from any proposed start date for publication."

In oral evidence to the committee, the Scottish Nationalists raised the hypothetical case of a lottery jackpot winner who stipulated anonymity in collecting his prize - but also wanted to give a substantial sum to the SNP.

Mr Reid told the committee that although Connery had been nominated for a knighthood by the outgoing Conservative government, the proposal had been "declined" after he played a major role in last year's referendum campaign.

"Clearly, it gives rise to concerns in the SNP about discrimination. People should be able to contribute openly to political parties but should not be discriminated against for doing so."

He said the fears of discrimination arose from the fact that large parts of Scotland were in the "grip" of one party, and had been so for some time.

The Scottish Labour Party attacked the SNP in its evidence to the committee which said mandatory disclosure by parties of their audited accounts and the source and size of large donations should be a "first step" in the direction of reform. Labour said the SNP had been too secretive.

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High-earning barristers will come under scrutiny as House of Lords investigates legal aid

Lawyers' pay: Is it an injustice?

By Kim Sengupta

IT GUARANTEES controversy, re-examinations and headlines: why are top lawyers paid so much, and in particular paid much more than other similar top professionals such as surgeons.

In two weeks, the House of Lords will hold an unprecedented and public inquiry into the thorny question of legal aid fees being claimed by some of the country's leading barristers.

M'learned friends are not taking this lightly. The four QCs whose fees have been called into question, high-profile left-wing barrister Michael Mansfield, Christopher Salloun, Peter Feinberg and Richard Henriques, have instructed fellow QC James Munby to represent them. And the Bar Council has hired one of the highest paid advocates around, Sydney Kentridge, to watch over the profession's interests.

Much is at stake. The Law Lords will be deciding whether barristers' legal aid fees should be on a par with the rate for private practice, or brought into line with other professionals paid from public funds. If they agree on the latter, it could mean a sizeable drop in the earnings of many QCs.

Inevitably this has brought into focus how much more top barristers earn than others paid from the public purse. The most obvious examples are senior doctors, the custodians of the nation's health, who on average earn far less, and in many cases work far longer hours.

Lawyers were in turn surprised and then resentful when one of their own, the Lord Chancellor, criticised their "fat cat" lifestyles. There were charges of hypocrisy as Lord Irvine was himself one of the "supersalaries" earning close to or more than a million pounds a year before he took public office in Tony Blair's Government.

The Golden Circle, as they are called, have not been affected that much by the attacks of Lord Irvine and others, and continue to be in demand, sometimes booked up for months in advance.

Of the four whose fees triggered the House of Lords enquiry, Mr Henriques led the league table of QCs' earnings from legal aid in 1995/96, earning more than £300,000. He claims this related to more than one year. In 1996/97 Mr Feinberg's earnings from legal aid were between £250,000 and £399,000. Mr Mansfield, as a celebrated civil rights lawyer, is often in the media on shows like the *Moral Maze*, and Mr Salloun is a former chairman of the Bar Council's public affairs committee.

But they are not regarded by any means as the top overall earners in the profession. Among these are Jonathan Sumption, who carries the sobriquet of once being described as "the cleverest man in England" by a colleague. Called to the Bar in 1974, he had become a silk within the astonishingly short time of 10 years, and had broken through the £1m-a-year barrier by 1994. He is now booked up for more than a year in advance by clients in the banking and financial services sector.

George Carman's latest victory was for the *Guardian* and Granada TV against Jonathan Aitken. The libel specialist has appeared in a number of high-profile cases including the successful defence of the *Sun* in the action brought by *EastEnders* actress Gillian Taylforth. He is believed to charge clients up to £10,000 a day with an additional £50,000 retainer.

It is different in the world of medicine. There a consultant in an NHS hospital will be getting between £44,000 and £57,000 a year. On top of that around 277 of them will be receiving a merit award of £54,910 which is normally given on a five-yearly basis.

The senior doctors can, of course, also make money from private practice, but across the board this amounts to an average of less than £40,000 a year.

Plastic and orthopaedic surgeons have more chance of making big money in the private field than colleagues in other fields.



Anthony Stephen Grabiner, QC

Age 53. Married with three sons and one daughter. London School of Economics and Lincoln's Inn. Recorder since 1990, and described as "one of the most expensive silks in the world". Chambers at Essex Court, Temple, charges £800-plus an hour specialising in commercial law. Annual earnings said to be more than £1m a year. Has represented Robert Maxwell against the Board of Trade, Rupert Murdoch to curb picketing outside his Wapping newspaper plant, and Morgan Grenfell in the Guinness crisis. When Lord Irvine went to the Woolstack one of his last cases was taken over by Mr Grabiner. He is known as diligent and thorough on detail, and often works late into the night.

Sir Magdi Yacoub is perhaps the highest profile surgeon in Britain, with the opportunity to charge extremely large fees to an international clientele for his specialist skills in heart surgery. But his basic salary remains the consultant's maximum of

£57,000 a year plus the merit award. Colleagues estimate that he probably makes between £150,000 and £200,000 a year from his private surgery, mainly carried out at weekends. But some of that is ploughed back into NHS research at the two



Sir Magdi Yacoub, surgeon

Age 63. Married with one son and two daughters. Cairo University. Foundation Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Royal Brompton Hospital, and consultant surgeon at Harefield Hospital, Middlesex. Regarded as one of the most eminent heart surgeons in the world. As a National Health Service consultant he earns around £57,800 a year. He also gets a yearly A+ merit award of £54,910. Sir Magdi is also involved in private practice where, it is believed he earns around £150,000 to £200,000 a year. Donates some of it to NHS research projects at his hospital. Said to work seven days a week, carrying out operations when necessary during the night. A "normal" working day is from 7am to 10pm.

hospitals where he works, the Harefield and the Brompton.

Not all bodies in law are against parity between lawyers and other professionals like doctors when it comes to legal aid. The Law Society will be putting in a written submission

to the Lords inquiry. Russell Wallman, the head of policy, said: "We think a fairly reasonably experienced lawyer might earn the same as a GP and the very best barrister or solicitor the same as a top hospital consultant."

Khashoggi 'welcome in spite of £3m debt'

By Kate Watson-Smyth

INTERNATIONAL arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi was welcomed as a gambler at a London gaming club despite owing £3.2m to another casino in the same group after his cheques had bounced.

The High Court heard yesterday that the multi-millionaire gambled at the Rendezvous Club two years after his £10m nine-week gambling spree at the Ritz Casino in 1986 during which 16 cheques were returned by his bank.

Max Kingsley, the former managing director of London Clubs Limited, said Mr Khashoggi was an extremely valuable customer and would still have been welcome even though he had debts outstanding from two years previously.

"The man is still a man of some standing and there would be nothing at all to stop him attending and nothing at all to stop him playing provided that he played for cash," he said.

Mr Khashoggi, who was once worth £2.4bn, is now being sued for the money - plus interest estimated at around £5m. He claims that the debt is legally unenforceable because he had an arrangement with the casino's management which effectively allowed him to continue gambling on credit, contrary to the rules in the 1968 Gaming Act.

Mr Kingsley said it was not company policy to sue for outstanding debts "except as a last resort".

"It was common knowledge at the time that he was one of the richest men in the world," said Mr Kingsley, who said he was not surprised by the limit allowed to Mr Khashoggi, who

was permitted to write cheques for £1m-plus.

The court heard that Mr Kingsley became aware of the outstanding debts in September 1986. He said that promises had been made that the debt would be paid off by the end of October 1986 and that it would be "foolish" to sue at that point. "We always hoped to get settlement without litigation. Casinos generally do not want to be seen to be suing their clients. It is extremely bad PR."

The dishonoured cheques were finally returned on 5 January 1987 but Mr Kingsley still did not contemplate legal action. The following July Mr Khashoggi offered a property in Spain as part of the settlement but Mr Kingsley said it was not suitable.

In December 1990, Mr Kingsley sent a fax to Mr Khashoggi asking him about the debt. Mr Khashoggi had explained that he was having financial difficulties as he was involved in the US in a Congressional hearing over the Iranagate affair and in criminal proceedings against him and Imelda Marcos, of which he was cleared in 1990.

Legal action was finally begun in December 1991. Mr Kingsley admitted that the company had not sent any letters asking Mr Khashoggi for the money, nor had they sent a solicitor's letter or threatened legal action before issuing the writ.

"The man had had enough chances to make some kind of payment and we had arrived at the end of the line and decided we were not going to get paid except through litigation," he said.

The case continues.

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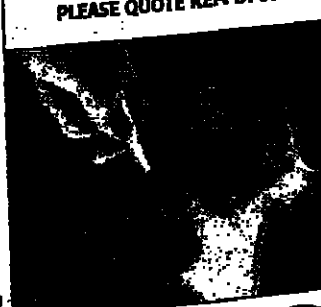
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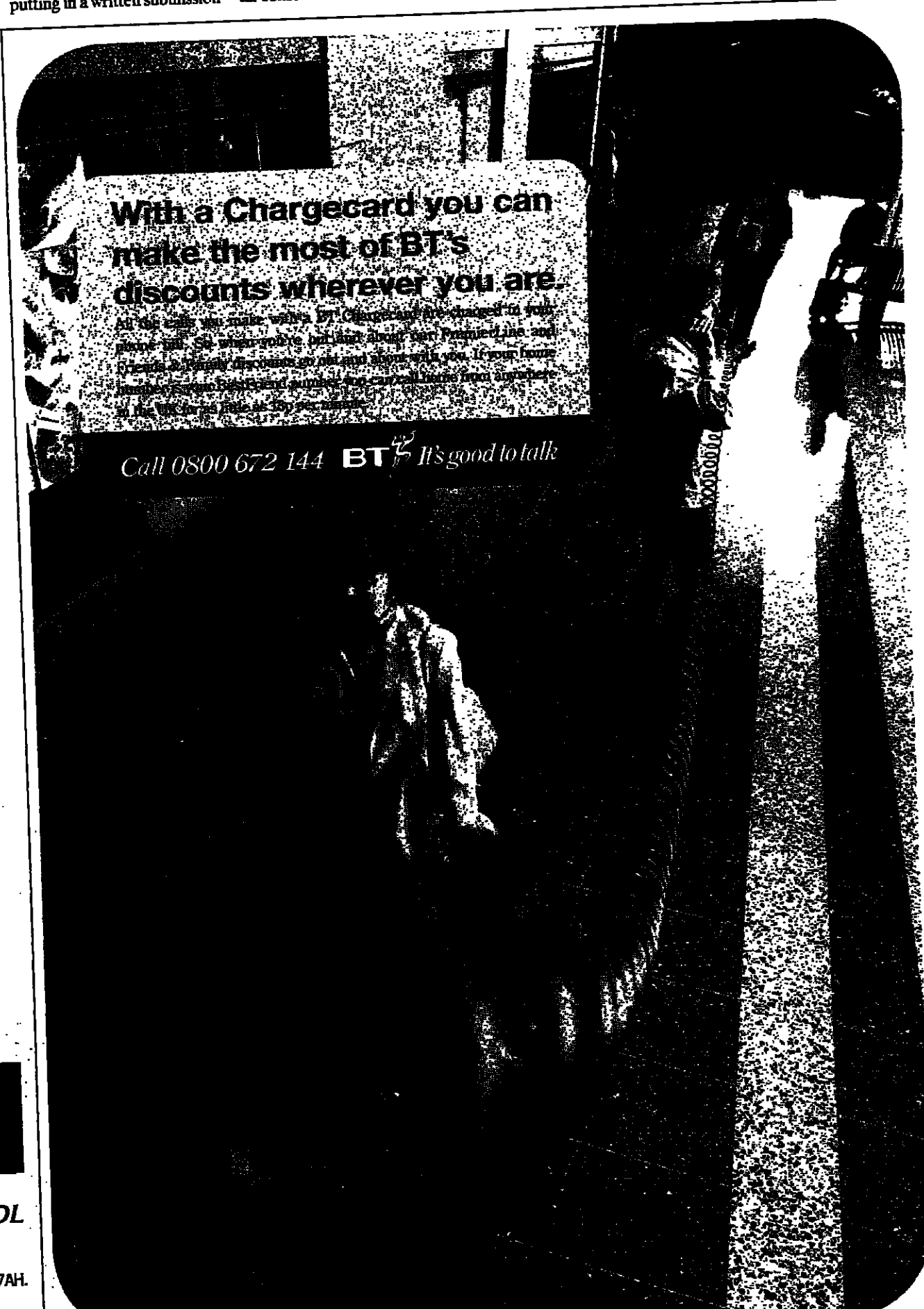
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Fast track to Europe: Government finds extra £140m for high-speed scheme and promises new services from north and Midlands

So, is this our gateway to Europe?

By Clare Garner

AT THE far end of Swanscombe High Street is Galley Hill viewing point – a ledge with a barrier, the kind you would expect to find at a scenic spot in the Lake District. Below are factories, warehouses, chimneys and waste land, with the Thames as a backdrop.

Hardly one of Britain's famously beautiful landscapes but one which is being transformed into the gateway to Europe now that the Channel Tunnel rail link is to be built.

The new International Domestic Passenger Station – one of the largest private-sector initiatives of recent times in the UK – is to open in 2003. Adjacent



The site at Ebbsfleet where the International Domestic Passenger Station, serving the Channel Tunnel, will be built

Photograph: Brian Harris

will be Bluewater, the largest shopping centre in Europe, due to open next spring, possibly a major leisure development with ski slopes and a casino, and as many as 13,000 new homes.

Not that it matters to the local

villagers – or so they think. "My personal viewpoint is that it's not going to affect us," said Ketan Patel, sub-postmaster in Swanscombe.

"If anything, it's going to help us that Ebbsfleet is so close. You know what people are like if they've got an hour

and a half to wait, wandering round, seeing what's in the area."

Barbara Gunner, who owns Barb's Sandwich Bar next door, agreed. "We could do with a bit of business," she said.

Mike Crosby, an independent Dartford borough councillor representing Galley Hill in Swanscombe, seemed to be the only person in the High Street yesterday who had reservations about the impact of the massive developments on his doorstep. "Everything is happening in this little one-mile

corridor between the A2 and the river. Nobody seems concerned. Everyone's been on a high, hyping it. I don't think anyone's given serious thought to the traffic generation ... It's already a nightmare, but soon traffic will be everywhere."

Prescott rescues Channel rail link

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

JOHN PRESCOTT, the Deputy Prime Minister, announced a rescue package for the much-delayed £5.4bn Channel Tunnel Rail Link yesterday with a deal that will see high-speed Eurostar services start in less than five years.

The new arrangement will mean the 68-mile London to Folkestone link will be built in two stages and will not be completed until 2007 – four years later than originally planned.

As revealed by *The Independent* yesterday, British Airways will lead a consortium that will run the Eurostar services and aim to run high-speed services from London to Paris and Brussels.

"We want to make Heathrow a transport hub," said Bob Ayling, chief executive of British Airways. "We will bring our international marketing expertise to the project."

He added: "There are a lot of people from the west of London that will use a European rail link."

The BA consortium, which saw off a bid by Richard Branson's Virgin group, also includes rail and coach operator National Express as well as the French and Belgian railways. Mr Prescott said BA's team hoped to start work on a Heathrow airport to Paris rail link in the year 2001.

The link was almost scuppered in January when London & Continental Railways (LCR), the troubled project's sponsor, discovered that Eurostar was hemorrhaging money and asked Mr Prescott to bail out LCR with a £1.2bn cash injection.

Mr Prescott rejected that option and instead sought to restructure the deal.

The new scheme will involve £140m of extra Government money, with Railtrack, the owner of the nation's track and signalling, playing a major part in the project.

In addition, ministers re-

quire LCR to come up with proposals before the end of the year for regional Eurostar services which will link the northern and Midlands areas of Britain with Paris and Brussels.

"This is an agreement snatched from the ashes of LCR's collapse," Mr Prescott said.

Railtrack will build and buy the first phase of the high-speed line linking the Channel Tunnel to Waterloo. The company, which announced profits of £388m – up from £346m in the previous year – will also have the right to take over the second phase of the project, the construction of the line to north London.

Gerald Corbett, Railtrack's chief executive, welcomed the deal saying the 68-mile rail link was a natural extension of Railtrack's existing business.

"We are pleased to be working together with the Government on this big project. It is a project of major national significance," he added.

Others were not so pleased. Lew Adams, general secretary of the train drivers' union Aslef, said the Deputy Prime Minister had inherited a "dog's breakfast" from the Tories.

"We are disappointed that we have not had a complete plan for the high-speed link but we recognise the problems that Government has faced," he said.

Mr Prescott, in a statement to MPs, said work on the first stage of the link, from Folkestone to Ebbsfleet in north Kent, would begin towards the end of this year and be completed by 2003.

Ministers pulled off an extraordinary feat of financial wizardry by agreeing on behalf of the Government to guarantee nearly £4bn in borrowing for LCR.

This piece of nifty accounting – unheard of in Westminster before – ensured that the extra cost to the taxpayer would be only £140m.

Business, page 23

HER LIFE WAS A FAIRY TALE.

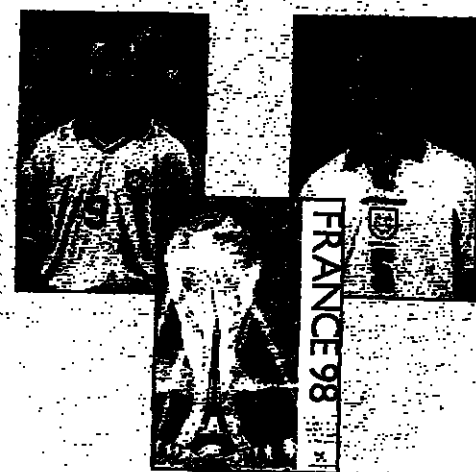
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Curbs on radio ownership may be eased

By Peter Thal Larsen

THE Government is considering plans which would lift ownership restrictions on Britain's commercial radio companies, paving the way for the creation of a new breed of media moguls.

Officials at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport are currently discussing a proposal to change the system which stops commercial radio companies from owning more than a handful of stations.

The move would free radio groups including Capital Radio, Emap - owners of the Kiss and Melody stations - and GWR, which owns Classic FM, to expand rapidly by taking over smaller stations.

A Whitehall official yesterday confirmed that Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, would meet representatives from the commercial radio industry tomorrow to discuss the proposed changes. However, he said the Government had no immediate plans to change ownership rules.

The industry is expected to argue that ownership restrictions need to be lifted in order to allow the creation of larger companies which can fund the investment required to launch digital radio services.

Until now, radio companies have been prevented from expanding by rules which restrict the number of "points" that each group can control. Points are awarded to a radio station based on the geographical area covered by its broadcasts, but

are not related to the number of listeners it has. As a result, Xfm, an alternative London rock station which has just a few hundred thousand listeners, carries as many points as Capital FM, the capital's most popular commercial station.

The radio industry has long lobbied for the points system to be abolished, but believed that any change would require an amendment to the 1990 Broadcasting Act. However, civil servants now think that the changes could be made without the need for legislation - opening the way for restrictions to be lifted as early as next year.

The proposed changes involve awarding points to the BBC's plethora of national and local radio stations. This would massively increase the total number of points, and dilute the share of the points owned by the commercial broadcasters.

This change could be introduced by a Proposal to Parliament, which would have to be passed by both Houses but would not need to be entered on to the statute book.

However, civil servants warn the proposal could be blocked by a legal hurdle because the changes require the BBC to be awarded licences by the Radio Authority - a move specifically forbidden by current legislation.

Radio operators argue that not including the BBC in calculations of the radio market is an anomaly. By comparison, the rules on television ownership which limit the share of the mar-

ket that an ITV company can control include the BBC in the calculations.

Whitehall officials are understood to be sympathetic to radio companies' problems. They also recognise that radio companies cannot wait until new legislation on media ownership is introduced, probably in the next Parliament.

The reason is that the Government is currently preparing for the introduction of digital radio, which will allow a whole host of new stations as well as added services.

The Radio Authority, the industry watchdog, has invited applications from radio companies to run the national digital licences by the end of the month. However, the cost of setting up and running the service has prompted large groups to shy away from submitting a bid.

Analysts believe that converting the existing national and local radio stations will require an investment of as much as £35m a year.



The DJ Chris Tarrant, of Capital FM. Lifting ownership restrictions on commercial radio stations could create a new breed of media mogul

Big Yin in alliance with auld enemy

SCOTTISH comedian Billy Connolly, famous for his dislike of the Scottish press, has joined forces with Scotland's *Daily Record* and Chrysalis Radio to bid for Scotland's largest radio licence, writes Paul McCann, Media Editor.

Connolly, who has had numerous altercations with reporters and photographers from the *Record* and its sister title *The Sunday Mail*, has become a partner in The Edge, a consortium bidding for a central Scotland commercial licence that has the potential to reach around half of the country's population.

The licence will cover 2.8 million people in Glasgow and Edinburgh and much of the

industrial belt in between. The Edge is bidding to provide a music station aimed at 15- to 30-year-olds that will play "indie" or non-mainstream rock and dance music.

Launching the bid, Connolly said yesterday: "This is a brilliant opportunity to make a difference. There have always been millions of reasons for not playing bands and musicians, but great people need to be heard."

The comedian, who now lives in Windsor and Los Angeles, has in the past spoken of his "hatred" of Scottish journalists and on his last tour ended up on the front page of the *Sunday Mail* for hitting one of its photographers.

IN BRIEF

CJD-variant could kill thousands, says scientist

A SCIENTIFIC team that discovered the link between mad cow disease and a new form of CJD yesterday warned that it could claim thousands of lives.

Members of the CJD Surveillance Unit admitted yesterday that they were in the dark about the effects of the new form of the disease that has already killed 25 people. Speaking at the BSE inquiry, Simon Cousens, an epidemiologist, said it was impossible to know how many deaths there would be. "At the moment it's really not possible to say whether there might be few more than a dozen or up to 100 or many thousands."

Hepatitis surgeon guilty

A SURGEON with hepatitis B was yesterday found guilty of serious professional misconduct and banned from operating for three years after fatally infecting a patient when he carried on with an operation after cutting himself with a scalpel. Sanjay Ingley was unimpressed as he was barred at the General Medical Council at the end of the three day hearing. He has 28 days to appeal. He was found guilty of taking inadequate precautions by continuing with a hip replacement operation on Blodwen Jenkins, 83, in July last year.

£1.85m for brain-damaged boy

A SURVIVING twin who suffered severe brain damage when he was starved of oxygen at birth was yesterday awarded £1.85 million the High Court. Warren Dyer's parents Susan and Frank suffered a double tragedy when their other son, Wesley, was still-born at King's College Hospital, south London in 1982. It was initially thought Warren was not affected, but it became clear that he had cerebral palsy causing severe physical disabilities.

Housing boom threat

NEW housing is threatening the countryside by creating a huge demand for minerals and landfill sites, according to a report published today. A study carried out by the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) concludes that residential development has deep implications for the environment which go beyond the obvious loss of greenfield sites.

£50m buys Domesday estate

THE picturesque Warter Priory Estate in East Yorkshire, which dates back to the Domesday Book, has been bought by multi-millionaire Malcolm Healey from the Marquis of Normanby for a price thought to be up to £50m.

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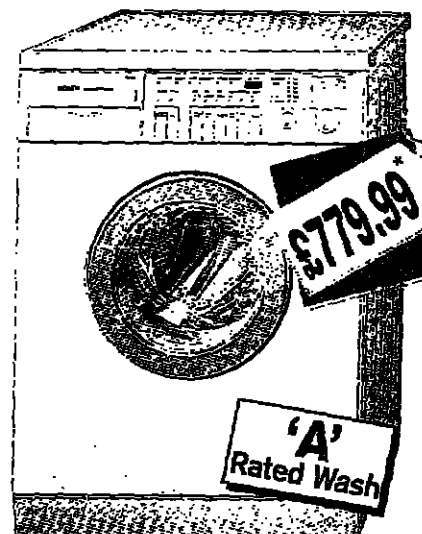
All these features combined together means Bosch can bring you the best possible wash results for your laundry.

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WFF 2001 washing machine

A Performance A Energy Efficiency

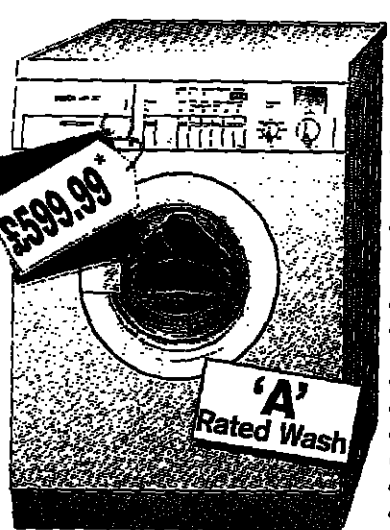
- '3D' AquaSpa wash system (uses less water and electricity)
- Electronically controlled through Premium Fuzzy Logic
- 1000 maximum spin speed
- 6 stage spin speed selector
- 21 wash programmes
- Short wash
- Rinse hold option
- Very quiet operation
- Softline design



WFF 3201 'Aqua Tech' washing machine

A Performance A Energy Efficiency

- '3D' AquaSpa wash system (uses less water and electricity)
- AquaTech sensor for optimum rinse results
- Electronically controlled through Premium Fuzzy Logic
- 1550 maximum spin speed
- 6 stage spin speed selector
- Stainless steel porthole door trim
- 22 wash programmes
- Short wash
- Time delay 1-19 hours
- Extremely quiet operation
- Remaining time indicator
- Softline design



WFF 2801 washing machine

A Performance A Energy Efficiency

- '3D' AquaSpa wash system (uses less water and electricity)
- Electronically controlled through Premium Fuzzy Logic
- 1400 maximum spin speed
- 6 stage spin speed selector
- 21 wash programmes
- Short wash
- Time delay 1-19 hours
- Very quiet operation
- Remaining time indicator
- Softline design

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WOK 2001 top loader washing machine

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- 6 stage spin speed selector
- Time delay 1-19 hours
- 13 wash programmes
- Rinse hold option
- Quiet operation
- Softline design
- 5kg capacity



WFF 1401 washing machine

A Performance B Energy Efficiency

- Duo AquaSpa wash system
- Electronically controlled through Fuzzy Logic
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- Spin speed button for reducing spin speed
- Colour coded fascia for ease of use
- 16 wash programmes
- Rinse hold option
- Quiet operation
- Softline design



WFF 1201 washing machine

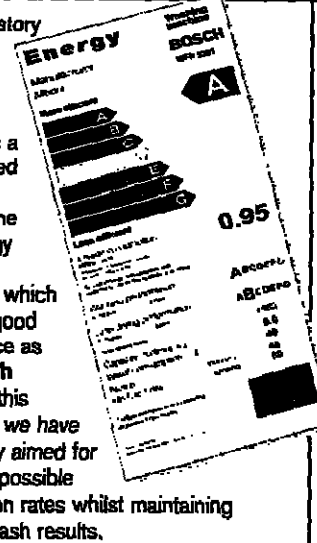
A Performance B Energy Efficiency

- Duo AquaSpa wash system
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Taxpayers lost £1.2bn in Tory rail privatisation

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

THE Tory Government was so desperate to sell off part of British Rail that it accepted £1.2bn less than it originally wanted on the deal, a committee of MPs heard yesterday.

Taxpayers were the losers on the sell-off of three rolling stock leasing companies, already heavily criticised by the Comptroller and Auditor General, Sir John Bourn.

Brian Souter, executive chairman of the bus company Stagecoach, told the Public Accounts Committee that he had dropped out of the bidding after hearing that the then government wanted £1bn each for the three companies.

It eventually received £1.8bn in total for them. The purchasers then sold them on within months for a total of £2.65 billion, making multi-millionaires of some of the managers.

Mr Souter's company was one of the buyers during the second round of sales, paying £826 million for Porterbrook leasing.

He said yesterday that if he could have raised the money to bid in the first round, he would have done so.

He was put off after one of his aides rang the government's consultant on the sale, Hambros bank, to find out the price.

"Some desperately pushy guy at Hambros told us they were looking for £1bn ... we simply weren't in that ballpark," he told the committee.

The government had allowed a fatal flaw to be left in the sale contracts, he said.

"If I had been handling the sale I would have put a claw-back clause, in that future profits would have been shared with taxpayers. To me that was the fundamental flaw."

Mr Souter said he believed that today, Porterbrook was worth about £1bn. However, because of investment by his company and a general rise in share prices, that did not indicate that he bought it cheap.

All three rolling stock companies were sold on, with Porterbrook going to Mr Souter's firm, Angel Trains to the Royal Bank of Scotland and Eversholt to Forward Trust.

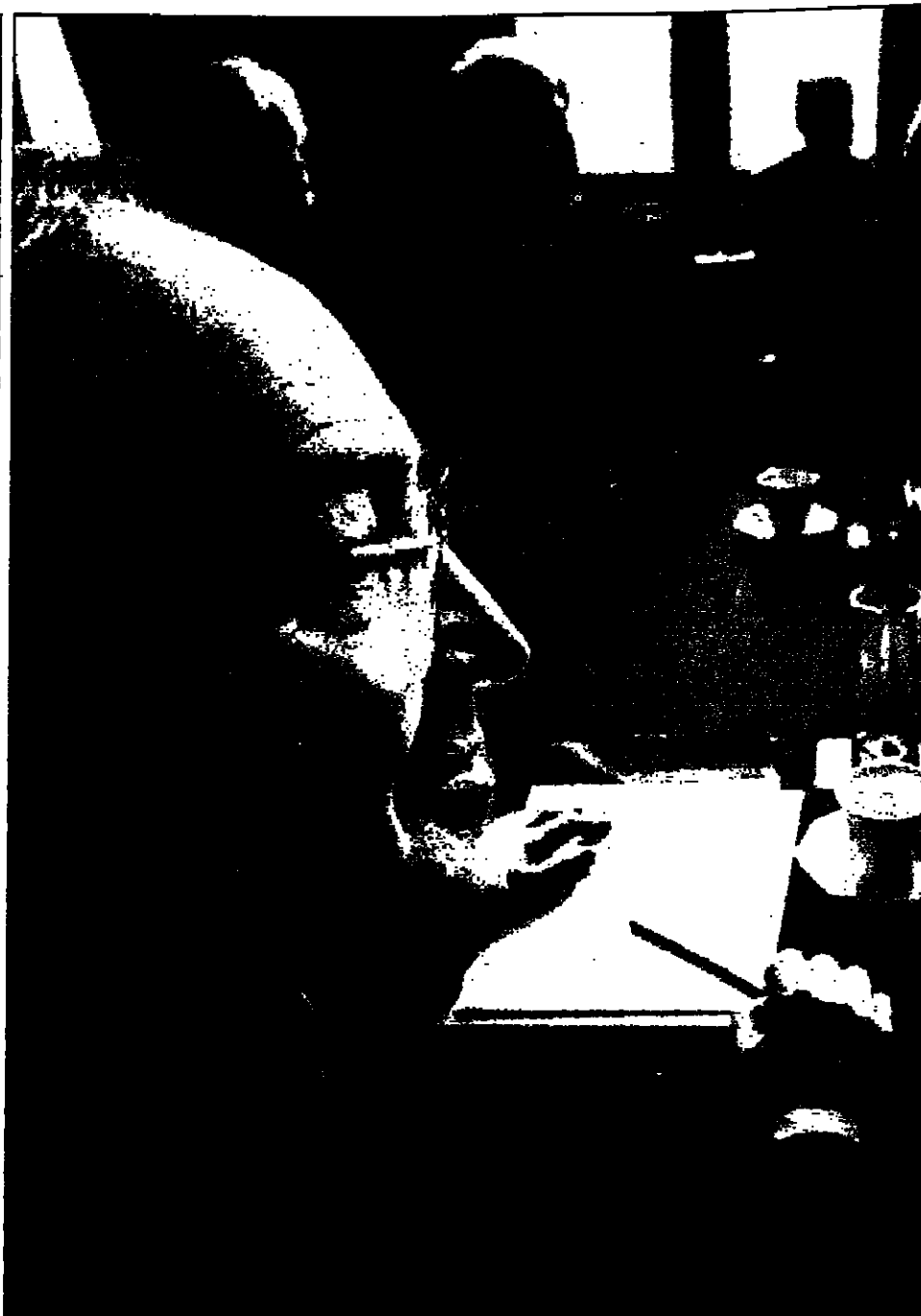
John Prideaux, who also gave evidence to the committee yesterday, made £15m from the sale of Angel Trains, while Sandy Anderson, a former BR manager, made £36m after leading the buyout of Porterbrook. Andrew Jukes made £15.9m from a stake of £110,000 in the sale of a third leasing company, Eversholt, to Forward Trust.

A scheme to safeguard beautiful areas of countryside was mismanaged by the government, the Public Accounts Committee said yesterday.

After 10 years, less than half the eligible farmland was in the scheme, which cost £32.5m per year.

In one case, though, 3,000 hectares of Dartmoor received grants from the Environmentally Sensitive Areas scheme even though only 2,000 hectares was eligible.

Inspectors found that farmers who received £310,000 were not complying with the scheme, but they only recovered £3,200 of the money. Administrative costs made up almost half the cost, though this had dropped recently.



Michael Howard and William Hague yesterday at the first meeting of the new Shadow Cabinet since Monday's reshuffle
Photograph: John Voss

SKETCH

Questionable tactics of the Labour whips

By Michael Brown

ANDREW MACKINLAY (Labour, Independent, Thurrock) should be canonised, knighted, awarded a Nobel Prize, given free tickets to every World Cup match and granted the freedom of the Palace of Westminster.

His question to the Prime Minister asked him to recall how MPs groaned at Tory backbenchers, who when in office, asked "fawning, obsequious, softball, well-researched, planted questions".

He demanded an undertaking from Mr Blair to "encourage loyal Labour backbenchers to provide scrutiny and accountability". Mr Blair looked horrendously uncomfortable - gobsmeaked is I think the expression - devoid obviously of any advanced knowledge of this crime of independent free thinking.

With no prepared script he gave an edgy, somewhat menacing, response. "I fully respect my honourable friend's independence of mind and I shall do my very best to make sure he retains it." I translated this as meaning "You'll never get a job in my government".

The man responsible for all of this, in fairness Tony Blair but from my experience, a quietly spoken, bespectacled, political secretary to Margaret Thatcher, called Stephen Sherbourne.

I first noticed it in those far off days in the early 1980s. Sherbourne had the bright idea of phoning me to inquire rather nervously and apologetically what I was going to ask Mrs Thatcher.

"Michael, I quite understand if this is not possible, but the PM wondered if you might be able to hint to her the broad subject you might want to raise this afternoon. Might it be foreign affairs? Industrial relations? This is simply so that she can give you as helpful an answer as possible."

From here we moved on to Number 10 actually suggesting: "The Prime Minister might like it if you were to raise foreign affairs."

By the 1990s it had developed into Number 10 actually giving you the precise question written out. I even saw some scripts for those who couldn't read or act with stage directions ("pause, wait for noise to die down").

There was a time when most government MPs tabled their own questions because of an interest in a particular subject. They kept the Prime Minister in the dark about the supplementary and enjoyed making her sweat with embarrassment if she could not provide a satisfactory answer. Sometimes they even demanded her resignation.

Gradually, as the gloss wore off, most of us decided that asking questions was not important enough. We wanted to be ministers ourselves. So we were invited to be helpful. Then, to be helpful, we were told what to say. Finally, if we said it without fluffing the lines, we were given a ministerial car and a turn at the wheel.

The Tories started it. I and others like me acquiesced in it. Labour have completed it.

Now the only difference is that most Labour MPs begin their careers wanting their turn at the wheel as soon as possible. This means pleasing the whips from the start, by accepting planted questions to the Prime Minister, asking him if he is aware how marvellous he is.

How else can one explain subsequent questions yesterday from John Hutton (Labour, obsequious, Barrow-in-Furness) and Lindsay Hoyle (Labour, fawning, Chorley) who asked obviously planted questions on health and the National Lottery.

From my seat high in the press gallery, I could see Mr Blair open his file at the right place the instant these two were on their feet, giving the game away that he knew what was in store.

How can I verify all this? I have blood on my hands. I did it as a whip myself.

Michael Brown is the former Tory MP for Brigg and Cleethorpes.

Rebel MPs given leave of absence

LEFT-WING Labour MPs last night claimed that government whips were offering them "garden leave" to limit a backbench rebellion over the Bill to introduce student fees, writes Colin Brown.

A group of Labour MPs is lining up to vote against the Government over the payment of tuition fees and the abolition of student grants in the Commons next week. But some of their number claimed last night that they had been told to spend next week in their constituencies.

"It's funny how they manage to give us time off from the Commons when this Bill is due to be voted on," said one rebel MP.

Constituency leave was introduced by the Government after the election to help manage its large majority in the Commons. MPs are expected to spend the time on constituency business, and are not expected to attend the House to vote.

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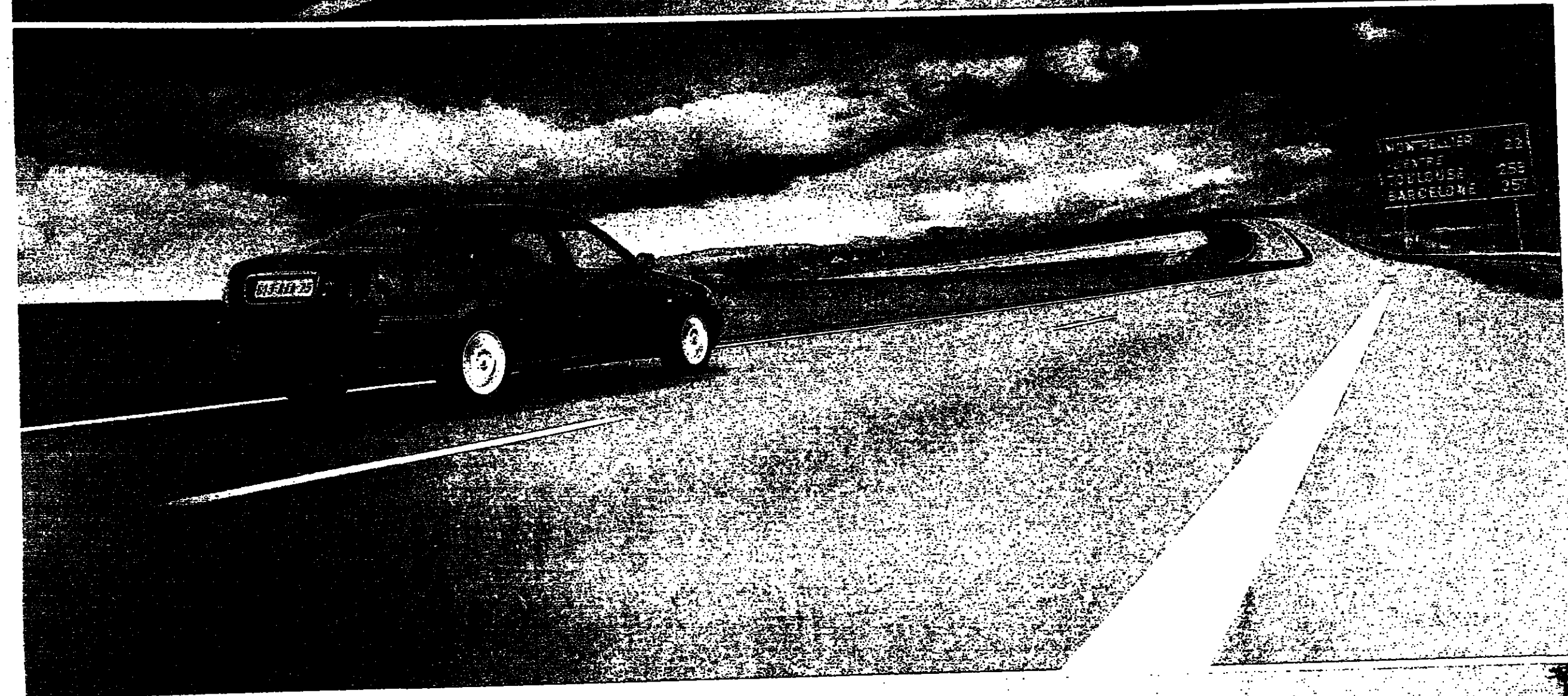
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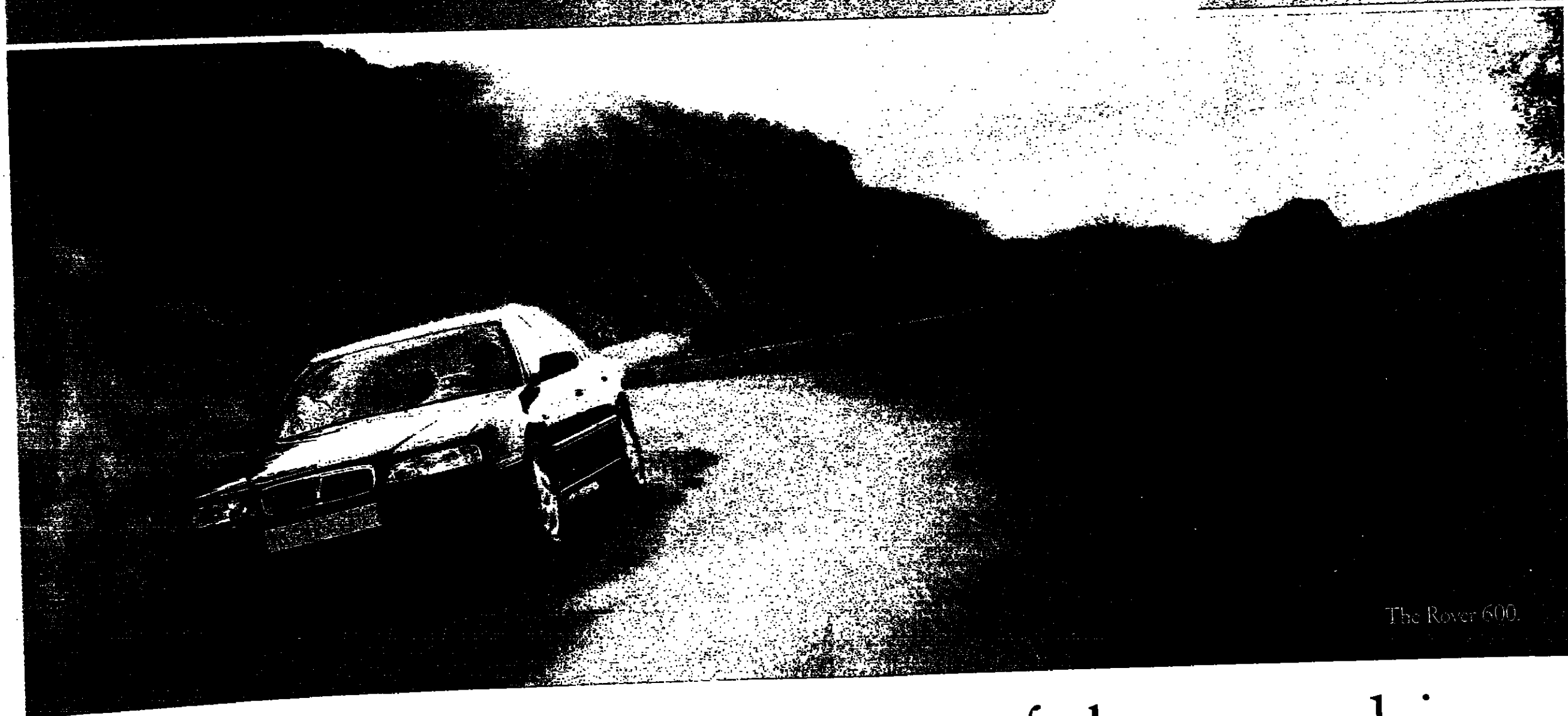
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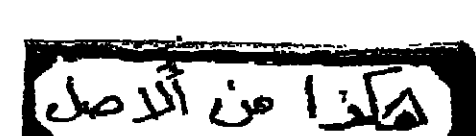


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Police restrain Bill Jenkins (above), father of murdered Billy-Jo (right), at the trial of Sion Jenkins (left) Photograph: Nigel Bowles

Murder trial opens with fight at court

THE father of murdered teenager Billy-Jo Jenkins lashed out at the girl's foster father as he appeared at court yesterday to face trial for her killing, writes Louise Jury.

Bill Jenkins spat at Sion Jenkins, shouted abuse and tried to attack him outside Lewes Crown Court, East Sussex.

The dead girl's natural father had to be held back to prevent him reaching Sion Jenkins, who was rushed into the building by minders.

Sion Jenkins, 41, is charged with murdering 13-year-old Billy-Jo on 15 February last year.

She was found bludgeoned to death on the patio of her foster family's home in Hastings.

She had been fostered by Sion Jenkins and his wife Lois for four years.

Sion Jenkins was deputy headteacher of William Parker Boys' School in Hastings until he was suspended as the result of the criminal investigation.

Billie-Jo's natural mother, Debbie Woods, who is estranged from Billy-Jo's father, was also in court yesterday to watch legal argument in advance of the trial, which is expected to start today.



Manchester's violent crime rate soars

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

VIOLENT crimes have risen by 50 per cent and rapes by a third in the past year in Greater Manchester, the country's second largest police force area.

Police figures revealed yesterday that there were also big increases in the incidence of muggings, serious woundings, sex attacks and assaults, adding to the city's reputation as a hotbed of violence and gang warfare.

The number of murders in Greater Manchester went up from 35 to 43 and the number of violent offences rose by 5,600 to about 17,000 in the year ending May 1998.

David Wilmut, the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, was criticised by the Manchester City Council leader, Richard Leese, earlier this year over what Mr Leese claimed was police inaction

against "rampant lawlessness" overtaking the city's thriving clubland. The council leader said crime was undermining the confidence of potential investors in the city.

He said police officers seemed "either unable or unwilling" to tackle problems caused by thugs and gangsters in pubs and nightclubs.

Mr Wilmut is expected to argue later in the week that some of the recent increases in recorded crime are due to different counting methods adopted by the Manchester force last Christmas.

Although the number of violent crimes recorded in England and Wales has increased every year for the past decade - a 1.7 per cent increase in 1997 - the scale of the increase in Greater Manchester is shocking.

Serious woundings increased by 17 per cent to 1,800, while less grave injuries and assaults soared by 56 per

cent to 14,700. Street robberies increased by nearly 12 per cent to 4,300, but less than one in seven of them were detected.

Rapes in the region rose by a third to 468. The more general category of sex offences, which includes indecent assault, went up by a quarter to 1,800.

A survey earlier in the year by The Independent also found that Greater Manchester had the highest homicide level of all police forces in England and Wales in 1996.

The North-west England region has struggled to shed its violent image following a series of drug related shootings and attacks during the 1990s.

In January 1996, a man was saved by his body armour after he was shot at 27 times during a street attack in the city's Moss Side area during "tit for tat" gang violence.

Mr Wilmut will present the new figures to the Manchester

force's police authority in what is expected to be a stormy annual meeting on Friday.

Overall, the number of recorded crimes rose by 1.9 per cent to nearly 300,000.

But the total number of crimes in England and Wales as a whole dropped by nearly nine per cent last year - the fifth consecutive decrease.

The only successes for Manchester were a 12 per cent drop in domestic burglaries and an 8 per cent decrease in car crime. The two categories make up about half of all offences. Firearms offences were also down, by almost 10 per cent.

Greater Manchester Police yesterday refused to comment until the figures are officially released on Friday.

Figures released this week by Scotland Yard show that violent crimes in the capital have risen by six per cent, while overall offences have gone down by five per cent.

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Ulster prisoner releases: Prime Minister's claim that Mo Mowlam is reviewing guardsmen's cases catches Whitehall by surprise

Blair raises hope of early freedom for jailed soldiers

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

TONY BLAIR yesterday raised hopes that two Scots Guardsmen serving life sentences for the shooting of a teenager in Northern Ireland could soon be freed from prison.

But the Prime Minister caught the Northern Ireland Office by surprise when he told MPs that the cases of James Fisher and Mark Wright were being reviewed by Mo Mowlam, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. "We are trying to get to the bottom of it," said one Whitehall source.

Fisher, 28, from Ayr, and Wright, 24, from Arbroath, were jailed for killing an 18-year-old Catholic man while on active duty. Their release might be seen as a move to buy off Conservative MPs opposed to the release of IRA terrorist prisoners.

Tory sources last night denied that there had been any back-room deal with Ms Mowlam when she met members of the Shadow Cabinet sub-committee on Northern Ireland on Monday to reassure them about the legislation on prisoner releases.

William Hague, who chairs the committee, told Mr Blair that their release was a "matter of urgency". Last night he was writing to Ms Mowlam to seek clarification. "We thought that, until today, she had ruled out any early review of their case. The Prime Minister seems to have changed his mind," said a Conservative Party source.

Andrew Mackay, the Tory spokesman on Ulster, said: "We hope that this is a step in the right direction. The Prime Minister's response was more positive than that I received from the Northern Ireland Secretary when I raised the issue a

few weeks ago." The campaign for the soldiers' release was stepped up after it became clear that terrorist prisoners could be released under the Northern Ireland peace deal. The Government faced criticism that the soldiers were being denied early release while terrorists were being freed.

Mr Blair told the Commons at question time that Ms Mowlam had been unable to examine the cases prior to a court case on 22 May. "Before this court case was concluded, Ms Mowlam was not able to conduct her own review. Now that is out of the way, she will do that as quickly as possible."

Later, General Murray Naylor, a spokesman for the Release Group campaigning for the two men, welcomed Mr Blair's interest in their plight. "We are delighted that the Prime Minister has responded to the growing pressure for the release of Fish-



Mo Mowlam and the Prince of Wales mingle with guests at a garden party at Hillsborough Castle yesterday attended by politicians and victims of violence

er and Wright by promising an early review of their cases."

The guardsmen had been seeking a judicial review of Ms Mowlam's refusal to refer their cases immediately to the Life Sentences Review Board. But

Mr Justice Coghlin said that there were insufficient grounds for quashing her decision.

Ms Mowlam had indicated that their cases would be open to review under the normal procedures in October. On 13

May, John Reid, the Armed Forces minister, gave no hint of any early review after he met the Release Group. He said he was concerned at the plight of the guardsmen but said the decisions would be "taken as a re-

sult of the due process of law". Tomorrow the Northern Ireland Office will publish the legislation to implement the release of prisoners and Mr Blair gave renewed assurances to MPs that it would contain the conditions

laid out in his speech in Balmoral, Northern Ireland, during the referendum "yes" campaign. Ministers have been seeking to persuade the Tories and Ulster Unionists that their fears will be dealt with in the legislation.

Ulster policing group members named

By David McKittrick
Ireland Correspondent

THE Government yesterday announced the membership of the new commission on Northern Ireland's future policing, following a delay to allow last-minute negotiations with Dublin.

The Irish government is believed to have had misgivings about the originally proposed make-up of the body, which is to review policing requirements and structures.

The policing issue is alive with political sensitivities, given that the views of local parties range from the Sinn Féin demand for the RUC's disbandment to the highly protective attitudes of Unionist groupings towards the force.

The assumption is that, if the ceasefires of the major paramilitary groups hold, the size of the force will be considerably reduced. At the moment it consists of 8,500 regular members, 3,000 full-time reservists and 1,400 part-time reservists.

The commission's chairman Chris Patten, the former governor of Hong Kong, is to be joined by a mixture of local and international members.

These include Sir John Smith, formerly of the Metropolitan Police; the former Northern Ireland Ombudsman, Dr Maurice Hayes; Ms Lucy Woods, who is the local head of British Telecom; and the leading Belfast QC Peter Smith. In addition, there will be two policing experts from the US and a third from Canada.

Set up under the Good Friday agreement, the commission is to report by next summer. It will examine the RUC's composition, recruitment, training, culture, ethos and symbols.

The announcement was welcomed in Dublin by the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, and in Belfast by the Ulster Unionist MP Ken Maginnis, who said: "Practically we couldn't have hoped for anything better." He urged RUC officers not to be defensive in their dealings with the commission.

Nationalists and republicans yesterday turned down an invitation to discuss the future of policing with the Northern Ireland Police Authority whose chairman, Pat Armstrong, said: "The policing debate has suffered too long from negativity with sterile and polarised arguments. We need more enlightened discussion." The nationalist groupings made clear they intended to deal instead with the commission, describing the Authority as irrelevant.

In its annual report, the Authority recommended leaving much of the RUC's established identity intact, including its name, uniform and emblem. It added, however, that it would be pressing for legislation compelling RUC officers to declare membership of groups such as the Freemasons and the Orange Order.

On the issue of plastic bullets, it said it had concluded with some reluctance that there was no effective substitute for the weapons in large-scale disturbances.

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Girls' sex abuser moves back into their street

By Roger Dobson

A CONVICTED child sex abuser who was banned from living in the same street as his young victims while he was on bail has moved back after being found guilty and released from jail.

The parents of the victims – who say the two girls, aged seven and eight, are at risk of seeing their abuser every day – are now planning civil legal action to have the youth removed.

Anti-paedophile campaigners say the case highlights an anomaly in the law in which it was possible to ban the abuser from living in the North Wales village before he was found guilty, and yet impossible to keep him away once he had been convicted and freed.

Lawyers are now attempting to find a way of taking civil action against the abuser on the grounds that he is causing a nuisance or harassment to the families by being there.

A 30-year-old man who warned people in the village about the offender in a leaflet campaign has been charged by the police with harassment.

He said: "This youth came to live in a house directly opposite the home of one of the girls, and four doors away from the other. The

families were so shocked they did not know what to do and asked me for advice. We all thought that everyone here needed to be aware of what was happening and I wanted to alert people to the dangers. "I and many other people find it crazy that I can be charged with causing distress to a child sex offender when the children he abused are forced to live opposite him. In my view, by simply being there he is harassing those children."

The 16-year old abuser was sentenced to four months in jail last year after being found guilty of two charges of gross indecency, and two of indecent assaults involving the two girls.

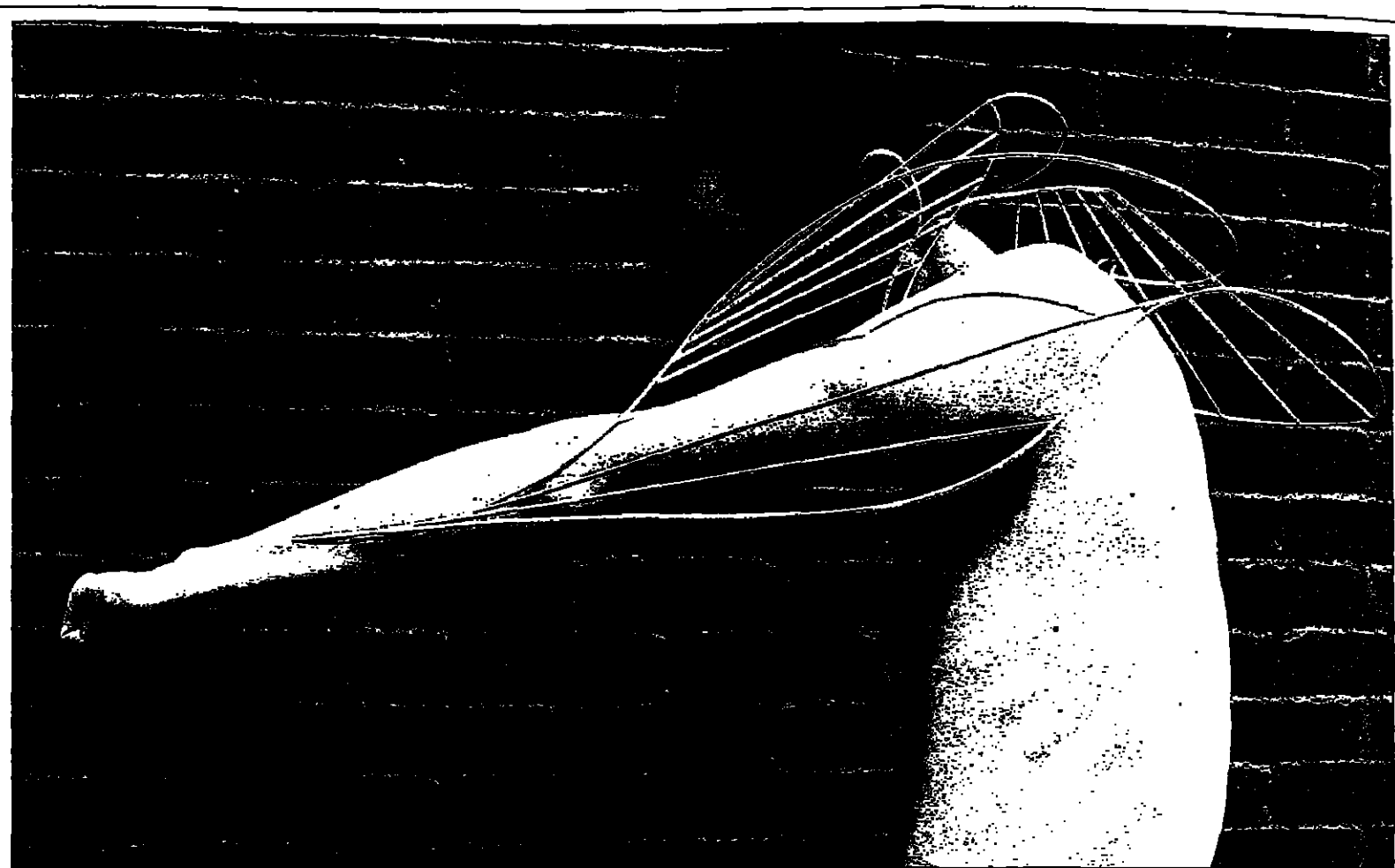
"There is no control over where he resides, although they could and did restrict his residence while he was on bail and still unconvicted," said a solicitor representing one of the families. "We are now looking for a civil remedy because of the problems the girls have with the offender living opposite them. It is a very awkward situation for them and their parents to be in."

"The problem is that we cannot find any precedent for what we want to happen. We are looking at the possibility of having an injunction for a continuing nuisance in that he is offending the injured party just by

his presence and that he should move."

Leading child law specialist, Allan Levy QC, said yesterday: "I think that under the law as it stands, unless there is a threat of violence or actual harassment then there isn't an obvious remedy for people in this situation. There obviously are issues of personal liberty involved too when you have the right to remain in property."

A Home Office spokesman said: "People cannot be forced to move address after they have served their sentence. The new Crime and Disorder Bill is introducing extensive supervision which will include people whose sentences are under one year."



Jacky Oliver's body jewellery, titled *Flash Gordon*, is in the Royal College of Art's Fine and Applied Art Show, which opens today. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Water firms' service goes down the drain

By Glenda Cooper
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

THE privatised water companies are not providing value for money or spending customers' money well, a survey says today.

Although most of the 1,000 people questioned said that they were happy with the services they received, three out of five thought that they were getting less value for money than they were five years ago.

Nearly half of all consumers have not recognised any improvements in service in the last few years and 70 per cent think shareholders have benefited more than customers from privatisation.

Since privatisation of the water industry in 1989, water and sewerage prices have increased by almost 40 per cent in real terms – a higher percentage than other privatised utilities.

Water companies have faced repeated criticism over giving their shareholders large dividends instead of spending money on improving the service.

One of the biggest areas of dissatisfaction uncovered by the Consumers' Association *Which?* report was water restrictions such as hosepipe bans which 70 per cent of people blamed on company leaks. Consumers in the North West, Severn Trent, Southern, South West Water and Yorkshire

areas were the most likely to have experienced these.

Nearly a third of respondents believed that water companies have not done enough to keep public areas of water clean and almost a third felt their water company did not keep them informed, with customers of North West Water feeling particularly left in the dark.

However, 80 per cent of consumers are satisfied with the safety and appearance of their water, and 66 per cent say their water had either always tasted good or had improved.

Customers of South West Water, which has the highest water bills in the country – an average of £355 unmetered – were the least happy, complaining about overall service, value for money and environmental policies.

Thames Water customers, whose average bill is the lowest at £200, also reported areas of dissatisfaction, along with Anglian Water households who pay an average of £325. Northumbrian water customers, paying an average of £235 a year, were the happiest in the survey of 1,000 people, scoring the highest ratings.

Helen Parker, editor of *Which?* said the survey showed widespread customer dissatisfaction. She called on the regulator Ofwat to introduce a one-off price cut for households.

DAILY POEM

Rock Music

By Les Murray

Sex is a Nazi. The students all knew this at your school. To it, everyone's subhuman for parts of their lives. Some are all their lives. You'll be one of those if these things worry you.

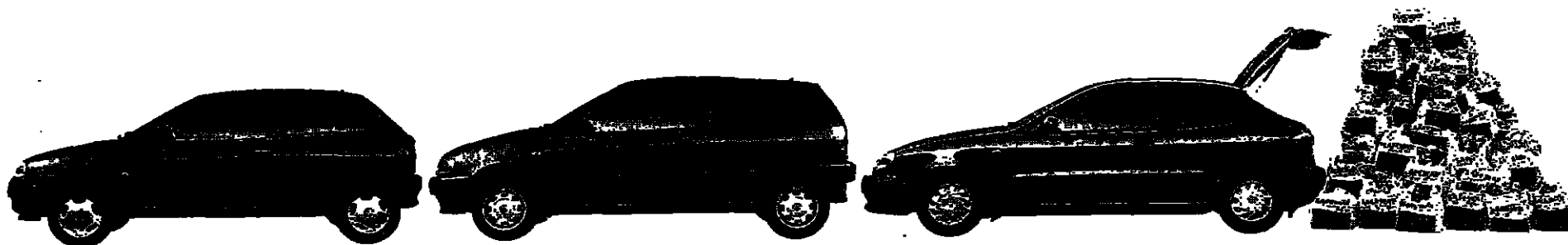
The beautiful Nazis, why are they so cruel? Why, to castrate the aberrant, the original, the wounded who might change our species and make obsolete the true race. Which is those who never leave school.

For the truth, we are silent. For the flattering dream, in massed furs reassurance, we spasm and scream, but what is a Nazi but sex pitched for crowds?

It's the Calvin SS: you are what you've got and you'll wrinkle and fawn and work after you're shot though tears pour in secret from the hot indoor clouds.

Our poems this week celebrate the publication of Les Murray's *Collected Poems* by Carcanet Press (£12.95). Born on a New South Wales farm in 1938, Les Murray has been a full-time writer since 1971; in 1996, he won the T S Eliot Prize. This poem first appeared in *Subhuman Redneck Poems* (1996).

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BANKING DIRECT

'The car lay on the track as the train came.

By Marcus Tanner

THE SKIES were blue and it was fine spring day when Germany's worst railway disaster since the Second World War took place.

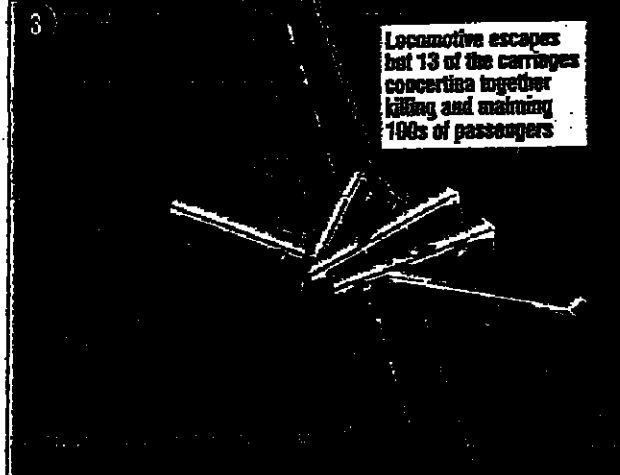
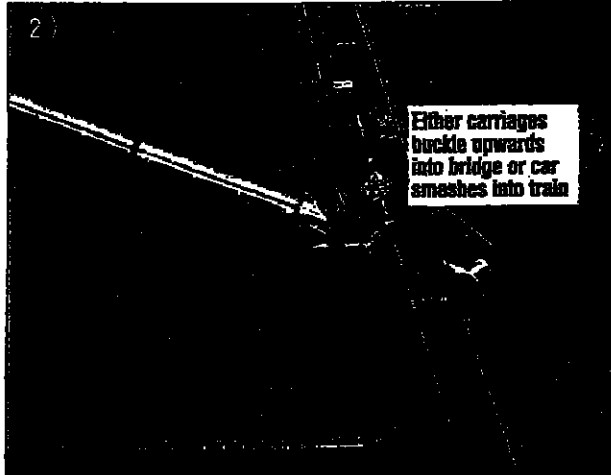
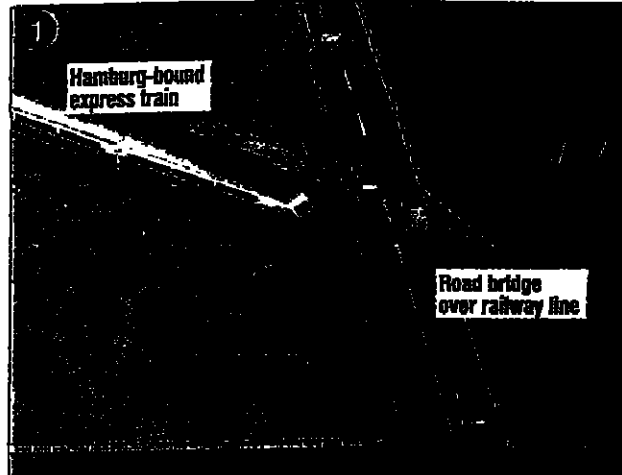
It was 11 in the morning. The sleek white Munich-Hamburg express, comprising 13 carriages and carrying between 350 and 400 passengers, was speeding along at 125 miles an hour, approaching the station in Eschede, 35 miles north of Hanover in northern Germany.

The train was more than four-fifths of the way towards its destination. The 600-mile journey normally takes five hours and 37 minutes.

Just before reaching the station at Eschede, the train approached a small bridge, about 30 metres wide, carrying a country road across the railway track.

There are two explanations for what happened as the train passed under that bridge.

One is that the Inter City Ex-



press jumped off the tracks after hitting a car, which had crashed through the railings on the bridge over the railway tracks and plunged on to the track, hitting the train.

A second explanation is that the train hit the bridge, and this made a car which had been parked on the bridge crash through the railings and fall on to the tracks.

A British eyewitness, An-

drew Davidson, said that the first explanation coincided with what he had seen. He was stopped while approaching the bridge by the German police, who told him there had been an accident with a car coming off the bridge.

"The car was on its side on the tracks," he said. "Then, out of nowhere, came the express train and everyone just closed their eyes in disbelief. The

train had no chance to stop. There was just an almighty great crash that seemed to go on for eternity."

Police confirmed that a car, which was the property of a railway employee working on track repair, had been found, crushed, beneath the wreckage. However, it was unclear where the car had been parked at the time of the accident.

An additional mystery was

the extent to which a reported safety failing in the prestigious high-speed train was responsible for the accident.

According to the driver of the train, who survived the disaster, the locomotive became uncoupled from the carriages just before they jumped off the rails.

Klaus Rathert, a German regional official from Lower Saxony, confirmed reports to a

news conference that the front locomotive had apparently decoupled from the passenger cars, saying this made them derail and crash into the bridge.

The train driver told officials he realised he had lost control over the passenger carriages when the train jerked and a brake signal came on.

One of the passengers, Wolf-Rüdiger Schilbener, confirmed that two minutes before

the accident he had heard "a tremendous rattling and shaking" in the train.

The locomotive cleared the bridge, but the 13 carriages behind the engine derailed and piled into each other. The force of the pile-up pushed some of the carriages several yards high into the air, like a concertina.

The impact brought the bridge crashing down on the last three carriages, killing many of

the passengers who were trapped under tons of concrete.

Last night the German authorities had still not agreed absolutely on what happened. The interior ministry of Lower Saxony said it believed that a car did, in fact, fall over the side of the overpass, derailling the train. But the German railway authorities were not able to confirm the cause of the disaster.

Safe and fast across Europe

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

THE Inter City Express train is considered to be the safest train in Germany and part of a fleet of 104 aerodynamic hi-tech trains that can travel at speeds of up to 175mph.

Until yesterday's tragedy, the ICE had an impeccable safety record. The high speed train, introduced in 1991, can carry up to 760 passengers in 14 sound-proofed carriages behind their 13,000 horse-power locomotives.

"There had been no accidents in which passengers were hurt or killed before Wednesday's fatal crash," said Hartmut Sommer, a spokesman for German Railways. "The train is considered to be the safest in Germany."

The distinctive white trains, which have travelled at up to 250mph in tests, use dedicated track to travel on.

Rail travel has made a huge impact on the continent. The tentacles of a high-speed network have already spread across Europe, shrinking the distances between cities.

Spain's AVE trains rarely drop below 130mph and cover the 300 miles between Madrid and Seville in just over two hours. France's TGV race around the country at 185mph

- matching the much-vaunted Eurostar's top speed. By 2005, Germany plans to have a "maglev" train zipping along at 250mph on a cushion of air between Hamburg and Berlin.

High-speed trains have dramatically cut travel times and lured travellers away from aeroplanes and roads. In Germany, rail travel is up 35 per cent while air's market share has dropped 10 per cent on competing routes since the ICE was introduced.

The ICE only needs five hours and 40 minutes to travel the 823km between Hamburg and Munich, the journey undertaken by the train before it crashed.

The £18m trains cater for almost every luxury. All seats in the ICEs have headphones providing music and some have video screens. Passengers can make and receive telephone calls or use computerised information terminals in each carriage. The trains are also equipped with a conference centre, restaurant and bar.

Given the apparent cause of the accident, it is unlikely that many will question the safety of the ICEs. Not a single person has died in an accident on the Japanese *shinkansen* bullet train - which first started running in 1964.

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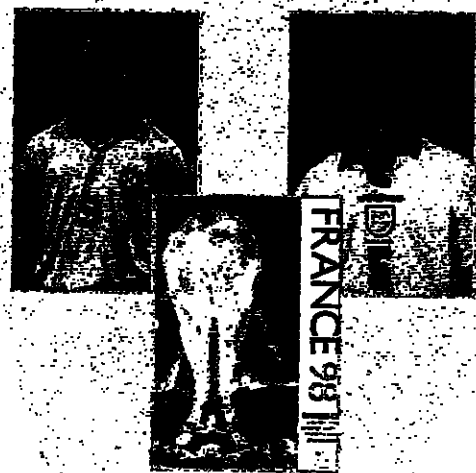
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Ronaldo of Inter Milan
vs Brazil

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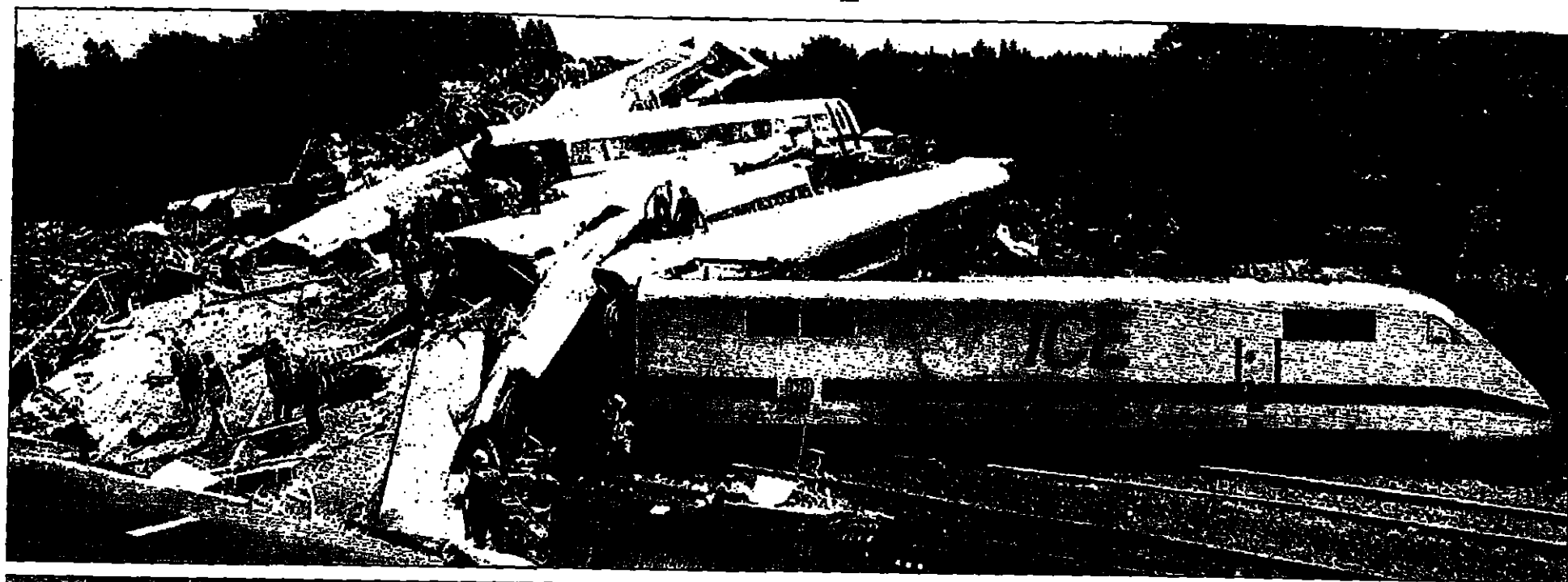
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Everyone just closed their eyes in disbelief



The German Inter City Express lying crumpled near the bridge outside Eschede, near Hanover. Some coaches are a jumbled mass of metal, others point to the sky. Rescue workers, left, were hoping to find survivors

Photographs: AP, AFP, Reuters

Worst crash for 30 years

THE train crash that killed about 70 people and injured around 300 yesterday is the worst in Germany for more than three decades.

1992 - Ten people were killed after a passenger train smashed into a derailed freight wagon.

1989 - Gas blast causes USSR's worst rail disaster, killing 800.

1988 - Britain's worst rail disaster: 35 people die at Clapham when trains collide.

1985 - 150 people killed in Portugal rail disaster.

1985 - More than 20 killed as train crashes into bus in Israel.

Randeep Ramesh

Silent carnage among the wild roses

By Dieter Osterman, in Eschede
Joachim Wille, in Frankfurt and
Karsten Pflog, in Hamburg

SEEN from below, the bridge close to Eschede station, where wild roses are in bloom on the approach road, looks spectacular. Only in one place do the remains of an Inter-City Express (ICE) coach protrude - hollow and ghostly - into the air.

Torn by the force of the impact, the connecting passage at the end of the carriage stretches skywards like a gaping mouth - as though the silver-grey compartment had uttered a death cry, when one coach, travelling at around 125mph, rammed straight under the previous coach, which had smashed into the bridge.

Several coaches lie wedged over and into each other. Together, they are less than 20 metres long - but piled up almost as high. Only the tip of the flattened final coach, with the red "ICE" logo, which came to a

halt before smashing into the ruins, retains its own shape.

"The bridge just broke through," said Manfred Theil, who arrived on the spot with the first ambulances. "It was pure chaos, with dead and injured lying everywhere. I've never seen

'It was pure chaos, with the dead lying everywhere'

anything like it." There are dozens of ambulances, and helicopters circle overhead. Among the medical helpers and television cameras, seven black limousines wait patiently. They are the undertakers' cars from the nearest town.

A crane is supposed to lift those parts of the bridge which have buried two carriages un-

der them. Nobody knows what they will find there.

Wolfgang Arndt, a hospital doctor, was in the operating theatre when the alarm was sounded. In a nearby gymnasium hall, he stares with empty eyes into his coffee.

He says there is no comparison with a motorway pile-up. "There's a quite different force behind it. It is not comparable." A nurse points out: "When one imagines that this is just the mild version, you feel queasy. After all, the train ran into a stationary object, not into a train coming from the opposite direction."

Exactly what happened is still impossible to say. The regional spokesman for German Railways repeats the same message again and again: that the Munich-Hamburg train must have rammed the bridge pillar beside the rails when it shot through Eschede station with 13 coaches at a speed of around 125mph. The duty manager at the near-

by station saw the lone locomotive "just driving past" -

and immediately put on the stop signal for all other trains. Only three second-class coaches passed under the bridge, and were derailed with relatively little damage. Two further coaches lie under the collapsed bridge. The remaining coaches had concentrated in front of it.

The spokesman shrugs his shoulders helplessly, when asked why the train became separated from the locomotive. "Why the ICE touched the bridge, after going through here every day and always remaining unscathed, I don't want to speculate."

The train driver survived, but was in shock. He knew nothing of the car which was said to have fallen from the bridge on to the rails.

In the Frankfurt headquarters of Deutsche Bahn railways, they are equally hesitant to give the causes of the accident. "As long as we don't know

the exact cause of the accident, it makes no sense to speculate on the safety systems of the ICE," spokesman Hartmut Sommer said. The system had been checked by the appropriate federal institute; there had been no previous problems.

Seven black undertakers' limousines wait patiently

Despite the accidents, and even if the grisly events at Eschede seem to contradict it: the statistics show that rail traffic is still the safest way to move. In the seven years since the beginning of the ICE age, there had until yesterday been no serious accident with the super-train - only a death on a building site, and a collision in

a repair workshop. Since 1991, 130 million passengers have been carried in the ICE trains.

The spokesman for the VCD, an organisation promoting alternative forms of transport, was by chance in Bonn yesterday, pressing for a change in ways of travelling - with the support of the railways. "One travels in the train as safely as in the lap of Abraham," said Burkhard Reinhardt. The friends and relatives at Hamburg main station believed the same, as they stood waiting for the Munich train. Many of them probably only heard the news when they went home.

The arrivals board at the station initially merely declared a two-hour delay - because of "operational difficulties". Only after an hour and a half was it finally announced that the train expected at platform 12 would never arrive.

The authors are correspondents for the German daily newspaper *Frankfurter Rundschau*.

British soldiers on hand

A BRITISH soldier who led a unit of troops to help rescue victims of the German rail disaster in which scores of people died, spoke last night of the "absolute devastation".

Colour Sergeant Phil Forsyth, 32, from Newcastle, and 20 soldiers from the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, based at Celle in Germany, were among the first to arrive at the site.

Sgt Forsyth, speaking from the regiment's base just minutes away said: "An horrific sight met us. Some five or six carriages were piled up on top of each other. It was completely silent. Nobody could have walked away from that. I fear the death toll will be very high."

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50,000 flee as Serbs bombard Kosovo

By Rupert Cornwell

SOME 50,000 refugees have fled from their homes in Kosovo after the massive Serbian offensive against ethnic Albanian forces which has left at least 40 dead in the province and reduced villages to rubble.

Last night, spokesmen for the rebels likened the devastation wrought by the security forces of Slobodan Milosevic, the Yugoslav President, to that at Vukovar, the Croatian town razed by Serbian and Yugoslav army forces in 1991, and which holds the largest single mass civilian grave in post-war Europe. Paskal Milo, the Albanian Foreign Minister, spoke of a "genocide" against the local population, and warned of "scenes more painful than Bosnia."

The Serbian crackdown, the most extensive since the one of early spring which took up to 80 lives, was aimed at creating a no-man's land, several miles

wide, just inside Kosovo's south western border, to cut off the flow of weapons into the province, and prevent insurgents from retreating to bases inside Albania.

As the five-day operation appeared to wind down last night, Serbian security officials claimed to have delivered a "heavy blow" to the guerrillas of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), the increasingly powerful military organisation leading the campaign for independence from Serbia and the former Yugoslavia.

According to an ethnic Albanian spokesman however, Decani, a town of 2,000 at the epicentre of the attack, as well as surrounding villages, had been reduced to rubble by sustained shelling from Serbian tanks, supported by armoured personnel carriers. Serb officials implicitly confirmed the devastation: "They were very well dug in, every house was practically a fortress," one said.



Refugees from Prekaz, in the Drenica region, which came under attack from Serb police

Photograph: Alex Majoli/Magnum

"That accounts for the small number of casualties, but also for such a large number of destroyed houses."

In Brussels, Nato ambassadors held an emergency session to review their options. But although the alliance has already agreed a strategy of containment, including the

deployment of Nato forces along the Kosovo/Albanian border and a strengthening of the US contingent in neighbouring Macedonia, it took no decision yesterday.

"We cannot proceed until we have solid, well-thought out military advice," a Nato spokesman said. This may not

be forthcoming until a planned meeting of defence ministers on 11 June.

But in the House of Commons, Tony Blair spoke for the allies when he warned that further action by the Serbs would not be tolerated. "We cannot afford to have disorder spreading in that part of the world. I hope

that is a sufficiently clear message to Milosevic," the Prime Minister declared, insisting there would be no repeat of the West's vacillation which allowed the war in Bosnia to drag on for three years.

Meanwhile, prospects were dim last night for the talks on new political arrangements

scheduled for tomorrow going ahead between Serbs and ethnic Albanians. Indeed, the episode can only undermine Ibrahim Rugova and other moderate Albanian leaders, and drive ever more of their disillusioned followers into the ranks of the KLA.

Leading article, page 20

US bids to avert Asian arms race

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton yesterday condemned the recent nuclear tests by India and Pakistan as "self-defeating, wasteful and dangerous", and called for a concerted international approach to avert a new arms race in the subcontinent, writes Mary Dejevsky in Washington.

He also announced his intention to renew most favoured trading status for China for another year, praising its contribution to regional stability.

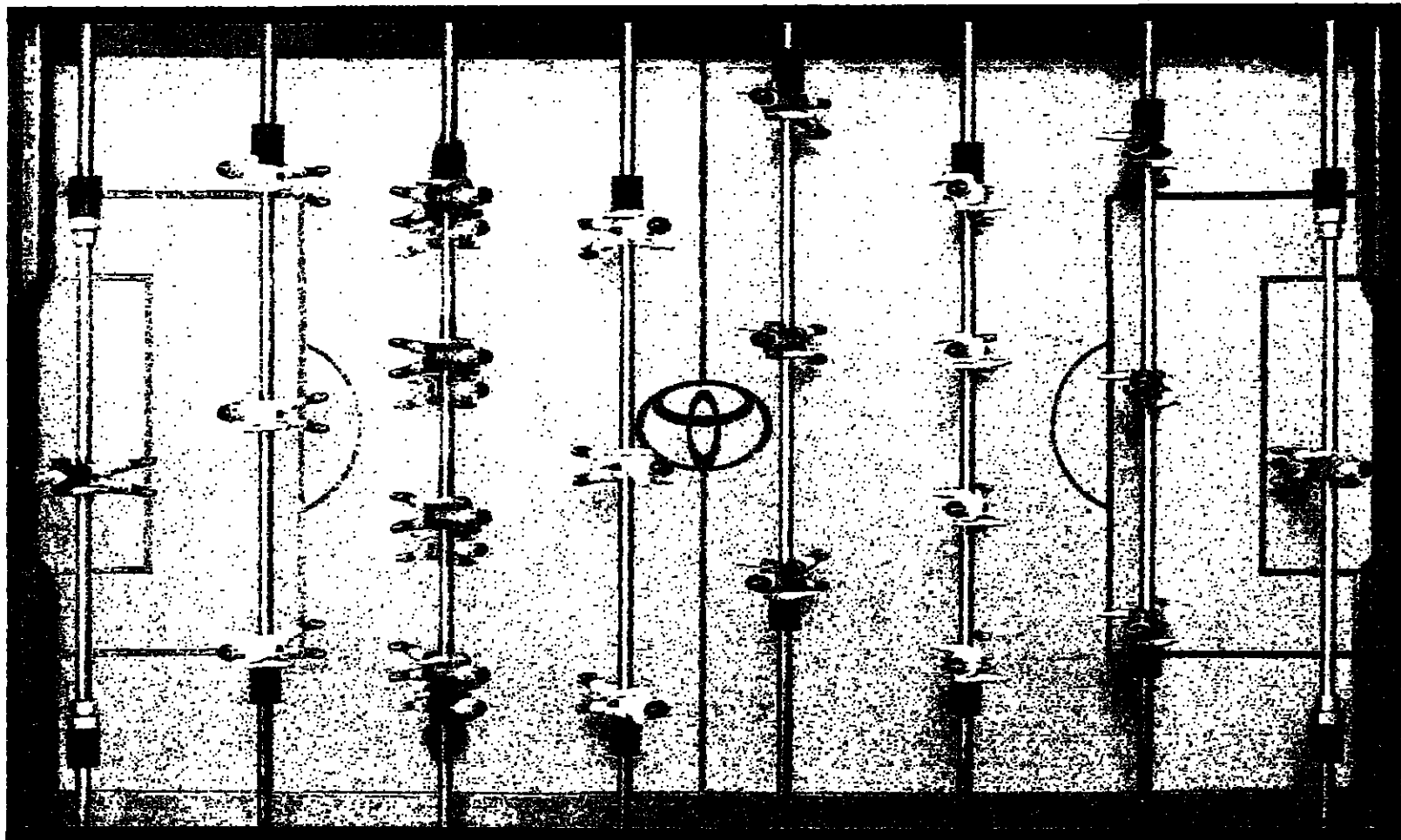
India has cited what it saw as an increased threat from China as one reason for its decision to proceed with the nuclear tests last month.

Mr Clinton spoke to reporters shortly before Secretary of State Madeleine Albright set off for today's meeting of "Big Five" foreign ministers in Geneva. The ministers of the existing nuclear powers - the US, China, Russia, France and Britain - are to discuss a joint response.

Mrs Albright reiterated yesterday that there could be no question of admitting India and Pakistan to the "club" of nuclear states. Britain's Secretary of State for Defence, George Robertson, on a visit to Washington, said the two countries had to be prevented from becoming fully-fledged members of the nuclear club as this would seem "almost to reward" them for the step they had taken.

Letters, page 20

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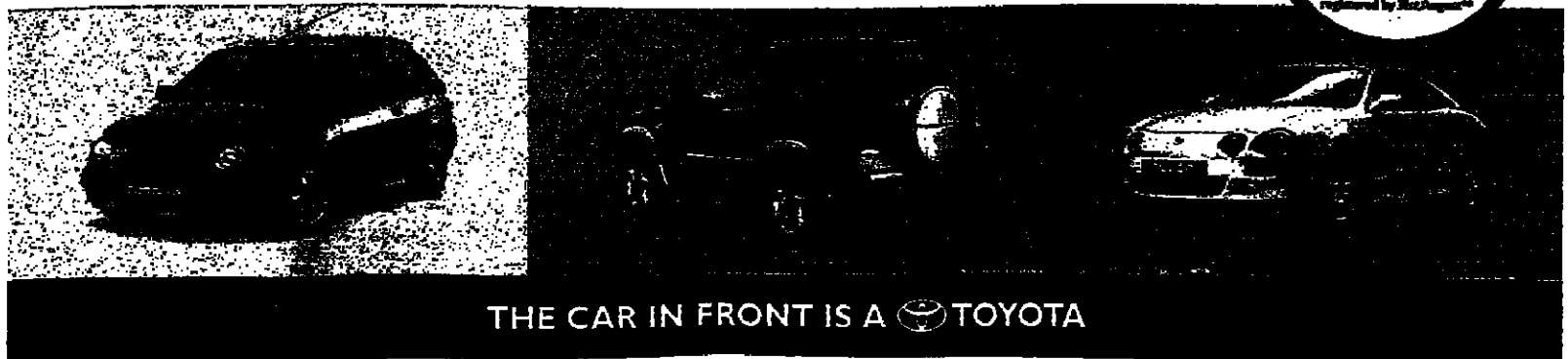
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THE CAR IN FRONT IS A TOYOTA

Sex in space - Why Mars mission could make the Earth move

By Marcus Tanner

SEX in space has never seemed an option until now. Those squishy, chunky suits are scarcely arousing. Nor are tiny, gravity-free craft, the lack of showering facilities and the fact that astronauts frequently feel like vomiting - a condition known as "motion sickness".

But Nasa officials are starting to debate the unofficial in-flight celibacy ruling in preparation for an unprecedented three-year journey to Mars, which the space agency is planning for the next century.

Thus far, men and women, even husbands and wives, have flown together in space, but there have been no known cases of heavenly bodies giving in to earthly desires.

In 1982, Svetlana Savitskaya slept in the same apartment as the (male) crew of Russia's Salyut space station, but this was a platonic affair. An American married couple flew on the same mission for eight days in 1992, though the chances of any

conjugal relations developing on that short trip were diminished by the fact that while he was working she was sleeping and vice versa.

The sheer length of the Mars trip, provisionally booked for 2012, is prompting some astronauts to question whether they can remain celibate that long. Michael Foale, the British-born American astronaut, says he wants to take part in the Mars journey, but not alone: "I would like to go with my wife."

Dr Al Holland - a leading Nasa psychologist - concurs, saying that for these long hauls, the space agency is going to prefer "stable relationships" between the crew rather than chilly professionalism.

Celibacy does have its backers, however. Russian cosmonaut Musa Manarov, who spent more than a year on Mir during his first mission in 1987-88, says: "A young guy could hold out three years without women." Laura Supra, 29, youngest member of Nasa's longest-duration test on Earth,



Michael Foale: 'I would like to go to Mars with my wife'

says: "That's one of the things you give up by going up there."

Doug Cooke, head of Nasa's space exploration office, warns that if astronauts get pregnant, they will not have an option of turning back.

The journey will take 180 days, followed by 500 on Mars and a further 180 days for the return voyage to Earth.



هكذا من الأصل

Hong Kong to defy China and honour Tiananmen victims

Stephen Vines
Hong Kong

TENS OF thousands of Hong Kong people are expected to be part in a mass act of defiance tonight by turning out to commemorate the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. On the Chinese mainland, any attempt to mark the event would be quickly crushed.

Before the handover of Hong Kong to Chinese rule, Pan Qichen, the minister previously responsible for Hong Kong affairs, made it clear that this kind of event would not be tolerated under the new order.

However, the rally has not been banned, and organisers are expected to deny the organisers a venue have come to nothing. A government official who declined to be named said: "What do you expect us to do? We don't want a confrontation over Tiananmen. We know this is something which is extremely sensitive."

The official line, frequently expressed by Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's chief executive, is that people should stop looking back and focus on the future. The massacre, referred to as the "Tiananmen incident" in official jargon, is viewed as a hiccup which has nothing to do with Hong Kong's present circumstances.

On Tuesday, local councillors

rejected an application to allow the permanent display of a statue called the *Pillar of Shame*, which commemorates the massacre. Wu Suk-ching, one of the government appointed councillors, argued that "this incident happened in Peking and we don't need to focus too much on events happening in Peking".

This view is not shared by Cheng Yiu-tong, one of the rally organisers, who said: "Now we are under Chinese rule it is a lot more meaningful for Hong Kong people to fight for democracy in China."

In the recent elections for the Hong Kong legislature, candidates supporting the democracy movement won two-thirds of the popular vote. The main pro-China party was put on the defensive in the campaign, when its leaders tried to deny they supported the Tiananmen massacre, in which hundreds were killed.

Though the authorities will not admit it, they are well aware feelings about the massacre are still running high. The admission is shown by the kid-glove handling of demonstrations of support for China's democracy movement. Last Sunday, a pre-commemoration rally was allowed in the centre of town.

A handful of well-known Chinese dissidents, who would



Chinese soldiers on duty yesterday in Tiananmen Square. Security has been stepped up for today's anniversary of the 1989 massacre. Photograph: AP

face arrest on the mainland, are allowed to remain in Hong Kong and conduct propaganda activities. The *Pillar of Shame* statue has been displayed in all of Hong Kong's universities.

Moreover, the local media, which was restrained in reporting the massacre at the time, has since become bolder.

The release of the Chinese student leader Wang Dan a few weeks ago was greeted by a barrage of sympathetic coverage.

The once bellicose Chinese officials stationed in Hong Kong have been removed and replaced by low-key bureaucrats who rarely speak in public and have, to date, made no comment

on local activities in support of the democracy movement.

Even the People's Liberation Army, whose presence in Hong Kong was a matter of concern before the handover, has remained resolutely low-key.

The authorities in Peking clearly have ordered their representatives in Hong Kong to

leave the limelight to the administration of Tung Chee-hwa. He receives head-of-state treatment when in China and appears directly under the wing of President Jiang Zemin.

China trusts Mr Tung, confident that his conservative, authoritarian views do not conflict with their own. In practice this

means Hong Kong has a certain leeway in tolerating protests.

But there are limits. The new legislature, which has a pro-government majority owing to the way the election system was rigged, is expected to pass a new law on sedition and subversion which threatens to make anti-Chinese protests illegal.

JAILED OFFICIAL SPEAKS OUT

THE MOST senior Chinese official jailed after the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre has spoken publicly for the first time since his release, calling for controls on the power of the Communist Party, writes Teresa Poole.

In a warning which will embarrass China's leaders, Bao Tong said: "If there are no controls on a power, internally it could be unpredictable and internationally it could also be unpredictable." He added that the brutal 4 June army crackdown could have been avoided had there been controls on the Communist Party.

Mr Bao's comments were made on the eve of today's ninth anniversary of the shootings in which hundreds of unarmed pro-democracy demonstrators were killed. About 20 dissidents have been detained in the past two weeks ahead of the anniversary. This year, the government is particularly anxious that the date should pass without public protests on the mainland because President Bill Clinton is due to make his first state visit to China in just three weeks' time.

Mr Bao was the most senior party insider to face trial and imprisonment after 1989. He was jailed for seven years after being found guilty of leaking state secrets - warning the students in May 1989 that martial law was being imposed - and not released until May 1996.

Packer closes in on rival's golden assets

Rupert Milliken
Sydney

AS A compulsive gambler, Kerry Packer is not easily rebuffed. In casinos and on racecourses from London to Las Vegas and Sydney, Australia's richest tycoon has won and lost millions.

Now the man that Paul Barry, his unofficial biographer, describes as "vas, superhuman, angry and unstoppable", is raising the stakes once again over control of John Fairfax Holdings, Australia's richest and most influential newspaper group.

The Fairfax newspapers have eluded Mr Packer for years. They are known as the "jewels of gold" because of the fortunes their two flagships, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, of Melbourne, generate from classified advertising.

Mr Packer's designs on Fairfax have been frustrated up to now by laws that bar the same person owning newspapers and television channels in the same city. He owns Channel Nine, Australia's richest commercial television network.

But recent upheavals at Fairfax have sent shockwaves through Australia's newspaper business and left people asking if Kerry Packer is about to rush through the group's gates.

The drama began on 18 May when Brian Powers, an American-born businessman and Mr Packer's closest lieutenant, resigned as chief executive of both the Packer private company and the public company that owns Channel Nine. Mr Powers had in effect run the Packer empire for the past five years.

Within hours he was invited to join the Fairfax board, and did so. Eleven days later, on 29 May, Mr Powers was elevated to chairman of the board. He replaced a chairman appointed by Brierley Investments, a New

The Sydney Morning Herald

WINTER CRUISEST HOW TO



The two Fairfax titles, top, that could be targets for Kerry Packer, left, or Lachlan Murdoch

Zealand company that has controlled Fairfax since it bought a 24 per cent stake in late 1996 from Conrad Black, the Canadian proprietor of *The Daily Telegraph*.

Brierley's move to relinquish the Fairfax chairmanship so swiftly has been widely interpreted as meaning that the New Zealand company has lost control of Fairfax. But to whom?

Mr Powers joined Fairfax as the representative of a trust controlled by Packer interests that holds almost 15 per cent of Fairfax shares. This is the maximum holding Mr Packer is allowed under the cross-media ownership law. Is Mr Powers a stalking horse for Kerry Packer? It may look that way.

But Mr Powers has the support of two other Fairfax directors and of institutional shareholders who are dismayed by Fairfax's recent performance. Over the past year, the company has invested heavily in its

newspapers to keep ahead of Rupert Murdoch, who controls two-thirds of Australia's metropolitan newspaper market. Fairfax's costs soared by 11 per cent, 10 times the inflation rate. The returns did not always match.

In Melbourne, readers have not responded to a re-design of *The Age*, whose circulation has fallen below the critical figure of 200,000 on some days.

Sensing his rival's weakness, Mr Murdoch in late April launched a price war in Melbourne, cutting by half the cover price of *The Australian*, his national broadsheet daily. The move has soaked up some Fairfax readers.

Bob Muscat, Fairfax's chief executive, flew to Melbourne for crisis talks over *The Age*. Then, within days of Mr Powers' arrival at the company, Mr Muscat shook the Sydney newsroom by sacking John Alexander, editor-in-chief and publisher of *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

Mr Alexander, one of Fairfax's most powerful figures, had been credited with boosting the prestigious Sydney paper's circulation. But he also spent lavishly on staff, buying up journalists simply to keep them out of the clutches of Murdoch and other Fairfax papers, and he recently resisted moves to abolish some overseas postings.

Mr Alexander's demise is seen as a harbinger of heavy cost-cutting. Murdoch newspapers have suggested that up to 100 Fairfax journalists could be for the chop.

Kerry Packer would not mind a bit. For a man whose roots in newspapers go back to his grandfather, the legendary Sydney press proprietor R.C. Packer, he has a low opinion of journalists. Over the years Mr Packer has become convinced that journalists, particularly Fairfax journalists, have been out to "get" him, as part of the Australian syndrome of "cutting down tall poppies".

As to what the latest upheavals really mean for the future ownership of Fairfax, Mr Powers readily admits it would be "disingenuous" to ignore his five years at the helm of the Packer fleet of television stations and magazines.

The Australian Broadcasting Authority, a regulatory watchdog, has launched an inquiry into whether Mr Powers' ascent has breached the cross-media rule.

And what of Rupert Murdoch's camp? Lachlan Murdoch, his son and heir, who runs the Australian arm of the Murdoch empire, said on Tuesday that he would not be interested in buying any Fairfax papers that came on the market. "When you reach the size that we have become, acquisitions become difficult," he said. Presumably this was a reference to government regulations, rather than any shrinking ambitions.

RICHARD GIERE
RED CORNER

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LACOSTE

Royal Academician Norman Ackroyd found a large number of submissions to the Summer Exhibition falling into two camps - Princess Diana tributes and works in the manner of the Young British Artist group

Photograph: Rui Xavier



All kinds of everything

THE great strength of the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition is the incredibly broad cross-section of visual art it encompasses.

Sanctified by history (it has been held every year since the Academy was founded in 1768), it yet straddles past, present and future, and this year includes at least one Young British Artist from the *Sensation* show, Gary Hume. It may not be on the cutting-edge of contemporary art, but it is no longer a bunker for ageing reactionaries.

Take Norman Ackroyd (born Leeds 1938), who was elected to the Royal Academy ten years ago. He is a printmaker, renowned for his atmospheric landscape etchings. This year he has been on the Hanging Committee, with special responsibility for the prints.

When I interviewed him, the multi-part sculpture by Antony Gormley - 60 cast iron figures in various postures, some strung up from the facade of Burlington House and adjacent buildings - was being dramatically re-located by crane and hawser in the courtyard.

Acclaimed sculptor Norman Ackroyd guides Andrew Lambirth around the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition

"This is a great idea. We could have it being installed for the entire two-and-a-half months of the exhibition as a kind of happening, a performance piece. People are probably watching it more now than they will when it's in place."

"Sculptors will covet this courtyard as a great place to show. I think this is one of the ways the profile of the exhibition will change. Similarly with the print room: everybody wants to be in there. The submission of prints this year was phenomenal, and we selected more than we could hang in one gallery, so they are spread out through the other galleries amongst the paintings."

On our tour we started with the gallery of prints Ackroyd has hung - the Large Weston Room. "Of the older techniques there are some wonderful wood engravings by Colin See-Paynton, and very good mezzotints by Leonard Merchant and Sharon Avariatis, as fine as anything done in the 18th century.

There are also lots of new ways of making prints, like this beautiful woodcut by Christopher LeBrun on Japanese paper. Then you get someone like Anthony Eyton, who at 75 does his first etching, in classic soft-ground and sugar-lift technique, but with the freedom of all his wonderful big pastel drawings."

Ackroyd points out a woodcut of a father and child. "I don't know who it's by - that's one of the great excitements of the show. It's a privilege to actually discover these things."

But isn't there a lot of dross to be filtered out? "That's inevitable, but you really get to see what's going on from Land's End to John o'Groats. Sometimes your eyes can't believe what they're seeing."

What characterised the send-in this year? "There are more people interested in the finish of what they do, with a sheer desire to make the thing sing on the wall."

Two themes stood out in the initial submission: pictures of Diana,

Princess of Wales, and work done in the manner of the YBAs. The selectors have to be rigorous. "There are ten pairs of eyes looking at each picture, but I pay especial attention to all works under glass - water-colours, drawings and all types of prints."

Looking round the print room, everything on the walls, except one large image of a tower by Maria Stroka-Robinson, is in fact under glass.

We talk of the tower. "That's not just a photograph on panels, it's an etching printed on to paper and then mounted on to linen in the way that the old maps were. I saw it when it was just a lot of pieces of paper on the floor at the Royal College and thought then what an ambitious piece it was. It's printed from 24 sheets of metal. That's an incredible amount of physical work: apart from the burnishing and scraping, it takes about three days to print."

Norman Ackroyd approves of

showing sculpture with the prints. He is so impressed with one object, *The Book* by Carl Danby, that he is seriously considering buying it. "It's two pieces of steel held together with wonderful big bolts, the kind you have on etching presses, with a burnt book in between the plates. I'd love to open it up and see what the text is, but that would destroy the mystery."

How different is this Summer Exhibition from any other? As Ackroyd stresses, a lot depends on the personalities of the members hanging the galleries.

For example: "Bryan Kneale and Phillip King, both of whom have an incredibly good eye for colour and materials, hung the two corner sculpture rooms very beautifully. And I think that one of the great things that we did last year was to move the architecture models out of Gallery VI which interrupted the long run of five galleries right down the north side."

Amongst the works that Ackroyd points out are the memorial groups to Carol Weight and Victor Pasmore (in Galleries I and II), and Patrick Procktor's version of *Perseus and Andromeda*, hard by *Krakatoa*, east of *Java*, in Gallery III. In Gallery IV, Ackroyd memorably describes the yellow figure sculpture by Malcolm Poynter as "a human barley-sugar stick".

A number of students have work on display. I ask Ackroyd whether they don't have enough exhibiting opportunities elsewhere; shouldn't the Summer Exhibition be reserved for older artists?

Ackroyd, himself a noted teacher, offers a curt response: "Students are artists. To eliminate young artists would be disastrous."

We're both struck by a large powerful drawing in Gallery V of the rush-hour crowds on Liverpool Street Station, done in conté and crayon by Jeanette Barnes.

A magnificent John Hoyland

abstract called *The Music* dominates Gallery VI. In Gallery VII Ackroyd singles out *Poolside/Mid-Afternoon* by Steven Rendall. "It's painted in colours that look like skin that's had too much sun. And the acidic chemical green of the swimming pool gives it a sense of desolation. The whole thing is Benidorm as Hell."

Finally I ask the million-dollar question - has the Academy a future?

Ackroyd is indignant: "It's essential that the Academy continues. Nowhere else is an art establishment run in its way, by artists, and it's a great way to do it. The Academy will always change slowly because its strength is that once somebody is elected they stay."

"Each year we probably elect two or three new Academicians, which means 25 or 30 Academicians over ten years, which is a third of the membership."

"We already have some terrifically talented Academicians - world figures - in architecture especially. Ultimately, this institution depends on the membership."

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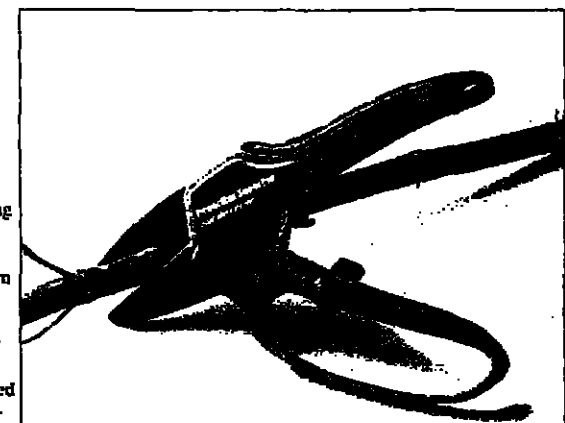
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Chris Morris is dead... funny

The anarchic 'Blue Jam' show is a blunted sword on stage, but his disciples don't care. By Mike Higgins

THERE are two schools of thought regarding Chris Morris's scabrous progress through the Nineties.

From his beginnings on the merciless early Nineties current affairs radio satire, *On The Hour* and its TV treatment, *The Day Today*, to *Brass Eye* and most recently *Blue Jam*, Morris's career, according to certain critics, has been a textbook illustration of a brilliant talent struggling off the necessary restraint of a sympathetic, but watchful producer.

Armando Iannucci, so the story goes, kept Morris's more extreme stunts in check (the media terrorist left Radio One in 1995 following a show in which he garnered reaction from various politicians to the news of Michael Heseltine's death) and then proved his worth by taking on to huge success Alan Partridge, the creation of Steve Coogan, an arguably less gifted early collaborator of Morris's.

In the view of Morris devotees, however, Iannucci's guiding hand fettered their hero's fevered imagination: a vision in which Morris's early morning/fate night Radio One show, *Blue Jam*, finally delivered him from petty moral codes.

Few who turned up at the Battersea Arts Centre to sit on cushions in complete darkness for a performance of



Media marauder Chris Morris

Blue Jam looked as if they were dissecters from the latter opinion.

The first fan into the studio prostrated himself in obeisance before the speakers - given that neither Morris nor his troupe of actors appear, I suppose the reverence Morris seems to inspire had to be aimed at something. As with its radio version, the show bathes its audience in a soporific series of fractured monologues, claustrophobic mini-dramas and spoof radio features, interspersed with snatches of ambient

music. Much of it Blue Jammers would have been familiar with: the belligerent driver furious with a garage for apparently shrinking his Vauxhall Carlton ("It's only two foot six high! How am I supposed to drive that?"), the acupuncturist who uses 14-inch nails on her patients ("Otherwise they'd slide off the table").

Blue Jam's best recurring character, a callously manipulative doctor interested solely in humiliating his patients, would seem to provide a rebuke. In one bizarre consultation, the physician cajoles his patient into jumping up and down with his pants around his ankles before joining in.

Quite apart from rubbishing the position of secular sainthood into which popular drama has elevated the medical profession, beyond the absurd deadpan and exquisitely naturalistic production of this and every Morris creation you'll find the peculiarly English instinct to roll over before authority dissected in pathological detail.

Other than as a favour to Morris's brother, Tom, (BAC's artistic director), there seems to be little reason for the inclusion of *Blue Jam* in the "In The Dark" season, however (this was one of only two shows, though BAC hope to bring it back in the next couple of

months). Morris's explorations of the depths of human obsession and neurosis are as chillingly amusing as ever, but the feeling of fan club solidarity has settled on the room, along with the fact that we've heard most of the sketches before, blunts the most incisive passages.

It's one thing to giggle alone: *Blue Jam*'s sociopathic meanderings at 1.30am. It's quite another to sit with 30 or 40 others listening to his fictional dialogue between a couple considering the fate of their abused and murdered child in the manner you'd expect in reaction to news of a misplaced umbrella.

I first heard this sketch on the radio, but the illicit frisson its breathtaking tastelessness originally brought seemed far harder to enjoy when, by its conclusion, the audience's initial laughter had been replaced by a nervous fidgeting in the darkness.

Chris Morris is a deliciously solitary vice and perhaps he ought to remain so.

IN TODAY'S EYE
ARCHITECTURE
AND DESIGN

هذا من الأصل

A witness to the worst of times

When Emmanuel Fisher, a British Jew, went to war, he hadn't heard of the Nazis' Final Solution. Then his unit was sent to liberate Belsen. By Jo Glanville

BEFORE the war, Emmanuel Fisher had never kept a diary, but three weeks before VE day in May 1945, his unit was sent to assist in the liberation of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and he began to keep a record of his experiences at "the horror camp", as the soldiers called it. "It was so horrendous that I thought in years to come I'd think that I'd exaggerated it, unless I kept a diary," he says. When he sent it to the newspapers after the war, he was told it was too horrific to publish.

Mr Fisher grew up in the East End of London. All his family were talented singers and he made his debut in the Yiddish theatre in Whitechapel at the age of 11. He later conducted the London Jewish Male Choir, with whom he made a number of records. There were hopes that he

might become a rabbi, but he became a teacher instead.

The army trained Mr Fisher to be a radiographer in the Medical Corps. Photographs of the youthful Private show him to have been an extremely good-looking young man - his eyes are still very blue and sparky - and his fellow soldiers look rather puny beside him. His unit - 32 Casualty Clearing Station (CCS), the Second World War equivalent of M*A*S*H - was a crack division, chosen to be the first CCS in Normandy on D-Day.

In his diary, he describes how they then spent months "idling" in Holland, before being suddenly sent to Germany. "We were happy," he wrote, "thrilled at last at the prospect of going into active service again." Instead, they were dispatched to Belsen, in north-west Germany, where 10,000 corpses

lay unburied and 60,000 people were in need of urgent medical attention. The experience, he says, scarred him for life.

His Belsen diary is now part of an archive at the Imperial War Museum, and *Index on Censorship*, the journal that campaigns for freedom of speech, has just published an excerpt, along with other contemporary accounts, in its special issue, "Gagging For It", marking the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

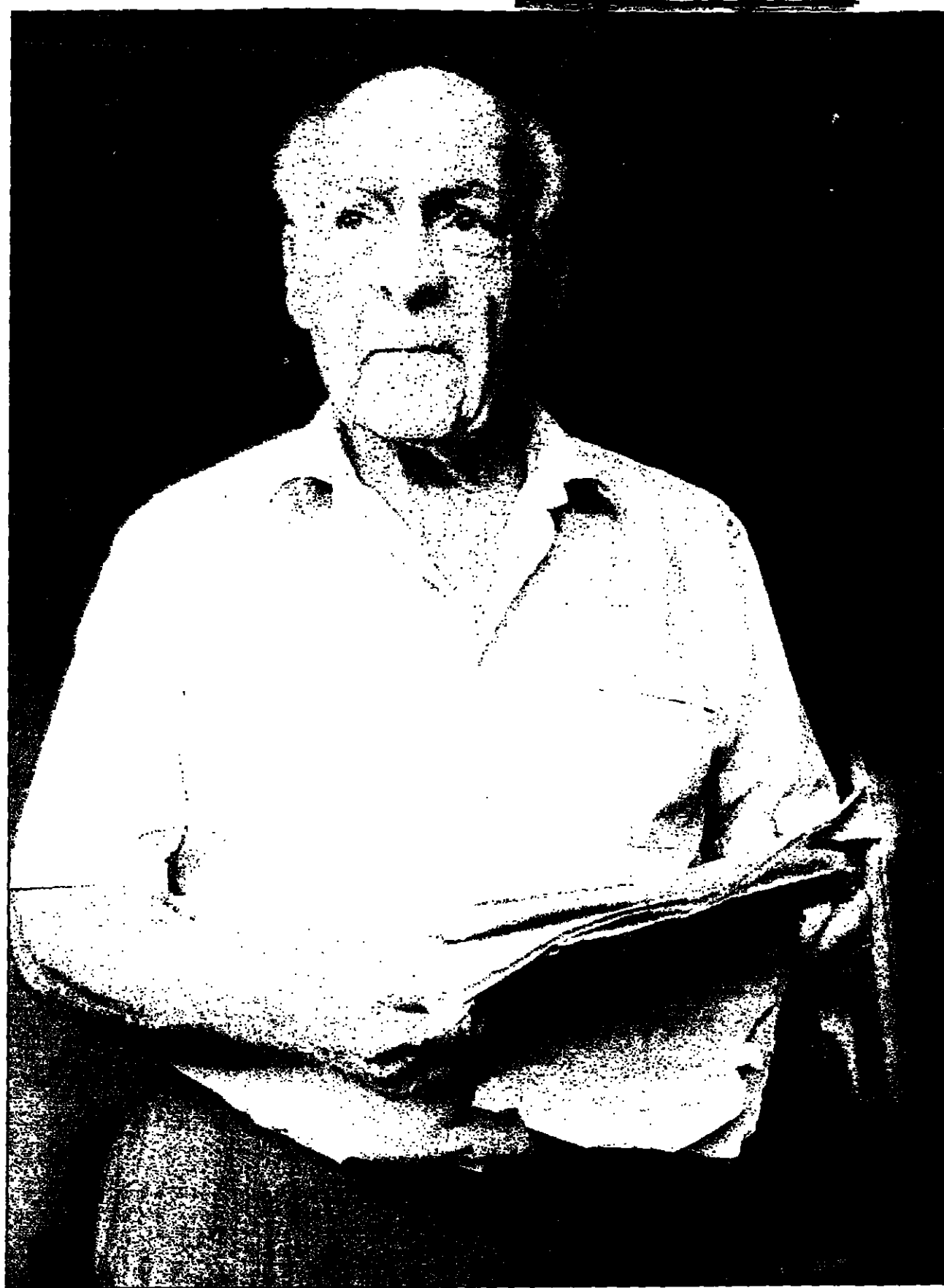
It is a remarkable document, not least because Fisher was the only Jew in his unit, and yet he makes just one oblique reference to the fact in his diary, when he describes giving a sweet to a young girl: "a co-religionist - as were most of these wretched people."

"I spoke, I suppose, as I always speak," he says, "as a humanitarian, not as one sect. When I was writing, I wasn't concerned with myself, I was writing about them."

The Germans had not originally intended Belsen to be an extermination camp. It was established in 1943 to house Jews who were to be exchanged for Germans interned in the UK and US. Within a year, it had become a dumping ground for Jews from other camps. Tens of thousands died from disease, neglect and starvation - among them Anne Frank. When the British entered the camp on 15 April 1945 after negotiating a truce, a typhus epidemic was raging.

"The women had their heads shaved, skinny isn't the word for them," remembers Mr Fisher. "One of the main priorities was delousing them. I saw armies of lice on beds, armies like soldiers, columns for them on bed linen. There was a horrific scene in the first days of looking after these people. There was a little anteroom in a delousing centre and a nurse had this survivor lying on her back and she was washing her. And the poor survivor was so emaciated that where her tummy was, you saw this tremendous concave indentation. The nurse had to scoop the water out with a big scoop. There was nothing there, just this enormous, deep, deep cavity."

He still dreams about the wagon in which he used to develop X-rays. "It was a tremendous thrill developing the film, I



Mr Fisher's diary is a unique record of the horrors that greeted the allied troops

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

used to say: 'Manny, you're the first man to see this.' He says that his dreams are sometimes more vivid than his waking life.

There was little call for his skills as a radiographer at Belsen. "I was nurse and mother and father there," he says. Aged 24, he was put in charge of between 150 and 200 patients, the maximum usually tended at one time by the entire CCS. Within eight days, 6,000 patients were brought to the unit for treatment in army barracks outside the camp.

In one of the most shocking extracts from his diary, he describes how a number of naked patients rioted for food and attacked one of the nurses. Many had died from overfeeding when the camp was first liberated and a strictly controlled diet had to be administered.

He does not recall having any knowledge of the Nazis' Final Solution before arriving at Belsen and tells a chilling story which illustrates the ignorance of his unit. "When we got to the camp, the Sergeant said, 'Here, boys, help yourselves, there are a lot of watches here.' I'm ashamed - I don't know

whether I took a watch but it didn't occur to me, we didn't know. We just thought it was booty that had been left lying around. Everybody grabbed watches. Dear God."

He wrote his diary in his tent by the light of a candle stub "at the end of a long filthy day". His unit was not supposed to go into the camp itself because of the typhus, but he used to sneak in with a mate. "The whole thing was just like a bad dream," he wrote. "I almost pinched myself to make sure that I was awake. The scene was more like a Hollywood representation of a concentration camp than the real thing. It was too unbelievable to believe. I was stunned."

Mr Fisher was also much in demand as an interpreter. He speaks German, French and Yiddish, among other languages. As a child, he showed a great talent for Hebrew and at the age of 10 he was teaching other boys their bar mitzvah readings. His fellow soldiers called him "Shakey" (Shakespeare) in recognition of his education.

He came home on leave from Belsen in time for VE day. "I can remember vividly being on a bus going to Trafalgar Square

and at that time they were showing the newsreels in the cinemas about Belsen and I heard a couple of old lags, for want of a better word, saying, 'Oh, did you see that stuff in the news about the camp? Don't believe it, it's a lot of propaganda.'

"I couldn't join in the celebrations. I felt utterly dejected. Everybody was cheering like mad and I just felt miserable. You know, you get a different view when you come from something like that."

The army gave Mr Fisher's unit 10 weeks' holiday in Denmark in recognition of its work at Belsen, a time which he remembers with great affection. After the war he married and had four children. He believes it is vital to talk about his Belsen experiences. "It's too horrific for people to actually picture and their memories are short. The beginnings of it are happening again with the rise of neo-Nazi groups and man's general inhumanity to man."

Index on Censorship 3/98, *Gagging For It*, £8.99. Available from bookshops, or telephone 0171-278 2313.

'I couldn't look at them. My eyes filled with tears'

Emmanuel Fisher's Belsen diary, 21 April 1945

TODAY our CCS began to receive some hundreds of these patients - all women. We had cleared a number of houses (temporary German military barracks) and prepared beds in every available space.

The patients were first brought to a delousing centre, where they were bathed and deloused by German nurses under the supervision of staff. Then they came to us, born on stretchers by Hungarian soldiers we had conscripted as "unskilled labour", and were literally bundled into bed, for most of them were, or at least appeared to be, just nondescript bundles wrapped in three blankets. I helped to carry some of them in. They weighed three to five stone - less than my little brother aged nine.

Acting as interpreter, I had to talk to some of them. One Jewish woman, aged about 45, as far as I could guess by her conversation (it was otherwise difficult), said, as soon as she was put in bed, "Please, I want to go to America. How long I have waited for this moment. They shot my husband and two sons in front of me." Another said "Must I die? I am only 17". Another spoke to me in English. She was quite insane.

I was giving each a warm drink - it took one woman a full minute to bring her arm out of her blanket to grip the cup. I simply could not look at these human wrecks for more than a few seconds. I found my eyes filling with tears, and had to turn away from my comrades.

These women were not easily distinguishable - the same formula applied to them all from the neck downwards - just human skeletons.



Pte Fisher in 1945

DILEMMAS

Don't count on your lodger becoming your friend



VIRGINIA IRONSIDE

Connie has a small room in her flat and as she's lonely she's thinking of letting a small room to a lodger. They'd have to share the kitchen and the bathroom. What are the pitfalls? Is it a good idea?

THE old-fashioned words for lodger were "paying guest", or PG. Those were the days when lodgers had zilch rights, and had to behave like pretty good guests or they were out. There was no onus on the landlady to behave like a hostess, either.

It was a one-sided arrangement, with marks on the bath, to show how far the water was allowed to come up, and timetables for actually having one - usually once a week. And there were always lists of rules: "No whistling in the corridors", "Please make sure at night that the front door is LOCKED", "Please leave this lavatory in the state you would wish to find it". And, by the cistern: "Pull sharply and release slowly."

Today no lodgers would abide by such rules and as long they pay their rent on time feel they have rights - at least until the lawyers are brought in. Of course, Connie can get them to sign an agreement before they come, something that, after years of being abused by lodgers, I finally learned to do. Eventually, my lodgers were hardly allowed to do anything.

But there's always a clause

you forget. For instance: "Do not allow strange dogs to wander around the house at night" is not one that would immediately spring to mind, but after I found my two-year-old son pottering around with a huge Alsatian at his heels one morning, the clause went in, batty though it sounded.

A foreign student could be a good idea, particularly one who barely spoke the language. Sheer terror and anxiety usually makes these lodgers good guests. Or businessmen who always go back home at weekend and who are hardly ever there.

But these would hardly be company for Connie. And there's the rub. Connie seems to be looking for someone to stop her feeling lonely. And yet in my experience, once you've got a lodger in the house, alone is something you're quite desperate to be.

I once looked for lodgers who could also be friends and advertised in *Loaf*. I soon found myself in the middle of my house, sandwiched between an unemployed drug-dealer and a girl who, when I asked, as she moved in, what had happened to her last place, revealed that she had a habit of burning candles at night. "And unfortunately

my last flat, as a result, was destroyed in a fire," she said, sipping coffee in my kitchen.

Connie should get a man in a suit, or a young girl who comes with her nervous mother, who leaves her the family phone number in case of emergency. Or an exhausted nurse who only has time to sleep. Or she should let the room cheaply to visiting Americans on very short-term lets (but remember their standards of hygiene are obsessive and they'll need new soap and fresh towels daily, and not a spot on the corridor carpet). She should put in a separate phone line, and preferably squeeze a tiny fridge and cooker in the small room.

The sad thing is that you can be just as lonely with a lodger as you can without a lodger, as I know myself. The ones who have lots of friends themselves are out all the time, so you feel neglected. The lonely ones with no friends are like that for a reason, and Connie doesn't want to be stuck inside with a loser night after night. If she's desperately looking for some extra money, yes, a lodger's the answer. If she's looking for frequent, friendly company, no.

READERS' REPLIES

Years ago I was lonely and miserable and took on a lodger. I used his presence to assuage my loneliness and eventually married him. He is a boorish workaholic and we have no shared interests. I stay with him because we have three young children.

Beware, Connie! Deal with your loneliness by going out, reaching out, not by inviting in. Go to any group, club, society or event whose activities interest you.

Mary, Edinburgh

The essential thing is to have a few simple ground rules.

Talk to the would-be tenant and say quite clearly when you want to have the kitchen to yourself, when you want to have your bath, wash your hair, use the washing machine and mention anything you feel strongly about - like un-done washing-up and a scum-line around the bath.

Then ask her (or him) what she (or he) feels strongly about, wants to do, can't do, and so on. The discussion must be friendly but also frank and must end

up with a few mutually agreed rules. Just feeling your way and trusting to the belief that you're both nice people doesn't work.

And one more thing. My first landlady said the first time we met: "If there's anything that annoys or upsets you, say so. I shall." She and I were as different as chalk from cheese and we got along fine for five years and remained friends when I went to work abroad.

Caroline Palmer

I have had lodgers for about 10 years and before that I always lived in a shared house. However, Connie appears to be doing it for the wrong reason - loneliness - whereas I have always done it for financial reasons.

In 10 years, many people have come and gone in my house. Of those, five remain life long close friends and only two have left with bad feelings, but they didn't steal anything.

Go for it, interview everyone and unless you really hit it off, say you can't make a decision until you have seen everyone, and always make it clear that there is one month's notice on each side.

Don't expect too much. If

they are worth living with they are almost certain to have a life of their own outside and however much you love your lodger you can find it tiresome when you hear the clunk of the front door just when you wanted some peace and quiet and they want to chat.

Greg Sherman

Make sure initially that you like, and feel that you could live with the person.

Draw up a list of dos and don'ts so that there are no misunderstandings to sort out later - and have the rent paid by direct debit. The best of luck to you.

Shirley Currie

NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

Six years ago my husband of twenty years left my teenage daughter and myself in the house, never to return. He didn't even kiss me goodbye. A week later his body was found in his car, 10 miles away, in a field with a tube attached from the exhaust. He left no note, and to this day I have no idea why he did it.

He had been rather bad-tempered for the six months previously, but apart from that, nothing. I cannot get over it. I ask myself: "Why, why, why?" all the time.

We had a good marriage and a lovely daughter. It has affected her very badly.

I feel like a zombie most of the time and in spite of

counselling, I feel I will never get over him. We loved each other so much, I thought. I just go over that last day again and again. How could he have done it to us? How can I cope?

Letters are welcome, and everyone who has a suggestion quoted will be sent a bouquet from Interflora.

Send comments and suggestions to Virginia Ironside at the Features Department, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL (fax 0171-293 2182), by Tuesday morning.

If you have a dilemma of your own that you would like to share, please let me know.

THE INDEPENDENT

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West dithers as Kosovo burns

AGAIN AND AGAIN, it has been the same story in the Balkans. The crisis builds. And then it builds some more. The West wrings its hands and regrets there is nothing that it can do. And then, when it is far too late to take serious action — when the house is already ablaze, and the structural timbers have fallen in — somebody decides to fetch a couple of fire extinguishers off the wall.

Thus it was in Croatia. Thus it was again in Bosnia. And now, it seems, we are seeing a repeat performance in Kosovo. None can say that this is an unexpected war. On the contrary, there have been predictions of conflagration ever since the Balkan wars began seven years ago this month. Slobodan Milosevic, the Yugoslav President, began his rise to power by preaching nationalism in the Albanian-majority province of Serbia. All the time, however, the politicians have been too busy, and have looked the other way.

What was just a few months ago still a smouldering conflict has now begun to blaze up in earnest. This week, several villages in western Kosovo were reportedly destroyed by Serb forces, in the latest clashes with the increasingly violent Albanian resistance in the region. Still, President Milosevic, chief author of the region's misfortunes, remains in power. And still the West seems keen to not to upset the Milosevic appeasement.

Tony Blair declared yesterday that Nato would not tolerate an escalation of conflict in Kosovo. "We don't believe we could afford to have a situation of disorder spreading in that part of the world." In reality, Mr Blair's declaration is futile — all too reminiscent of the ringing declaration by the then US Secretary of State, James Baker, in spring 1991, that the US "would not permit" Yugoslavia to fall apart — a statement Mr Milosevic took as a green light for using tanks to keep the federation together.

Paddy Ashdown was right to warn yesterday of the dangers of doing too little, too late — a warning which he unsuccessfully sounded on Bosnia. Mr Blair pretended to agree. But his statement that "we are watching the situation extremely carefully" will not have Mr Milosevic trembling in his boots.

The greatest paradox of Mr Milosevic's cynical policies is that the losers include his own compatriots. Non-Serbs have suffered untold horrors in recent years. But Serbs have also been heavy losers. Their early victories turned into bitter defeats, as they were driven out of territory in Croatia that they had occupied for centuries.

Thus it may well prove to be in Kosovo, which Serbs continue to regard as their heartland, even though Serbs are fewer than 10 per cent of the population. A Kosovo unconnected to Belgrade seemed until recently unthinkable. Slobodan Milosevic is making that extraordinary possibility come closer, however. If or when the massacres get serious — so serious that the politicians can no longer "watch the situation extremely carefully", but must attempt to pour water on the blaze — then it will be too late. Crushed by Serb force, the Albanians may lose much in the short term — but it is the Serbs who will lose everything in the longer term.

The knock-on effects — involving Bulgaria, Macedonia, and perhaps Greece and Turkey — are enormous. "Watching the situation carefully" will then be remembered as the fudge that it really is. If Kosovo matters, then it matters today. Tomorrow will be too late.

Schools pledge spins out of control

NEW LABOUR'S team of spin-doctors must remember when their five election pledges looked simply masterful. Their famous five pledges were slapped on to big posters, little cards and coffee mugs. Clear, simple, easy to remember. They were modest, and soothed the nerves of the anxious taxpayers of Middle England. The pledges may have been routinely derided as "timid" but this was far preferable to being accused of socialist idealism. But they did still betoken some sort of commitment to the public services.

Just over a year into the government, though, and the spin-meisters must now be feeling a little edgy. In their own formulation, we have passed through the "post-corporate, pre-delivery" stage and some serious and awkward questions about the chances of their "early" promises being redeemed even by the next general election are now being asked.

The Local Government Association's new report casts severe doubt on Labour being able to fulfil its ambition to reduce class sizes for five- to seven-year-olds to less than 30. At the practical level of running an infant's school, a head who has classes over the limit will have to resort to mixed-age teaching. This, however, is not always an ideal solution and is disliked by parents. The alternative — for the Government — is to reduce parental choice by going back on its reforms and restricting entry to schools where class sizes are rising — just the ones that parents want to send their children to. If the Government finds those solutions unappealing then it could raise taxes to fund the guarantee. Politically poisonous.

It need not have been so. The emphasis on class sizes no doubt went down well with focus groups, opinion polls and, indeed, the voters. But the very clarity of the formulation lent it an undue rigidity. Had the spin-doctors taken the policy implications more seriously, then they might have looked to America, where they prefer to regulate on the basis of the average class size, so building flexibility into the regime. In Scotland, where class sizes are subject to the law, they work on the basis of a band. In any case, being in a class of 31 rather than 29 must make a rather marginal difference, and not one that would justify the distortions that may be visited on teaching in the name of this pledge.

So it came to pass that the Government was throttled with the thinnest of threads. All of Mr Blunkett's excellent work on standards and tackling bad schools could be undone by a single soundbite. It is a salutary lesson in the dangers of putting spin before substance. The spin-doctors chose the wrong way to present the wrong target. They have also chosen the wrong way to restore faith in the ability of politicians to keep their promises.



New risk of nuclear war

Sir: A volatile and dangerous chapter has opened in world history. It is clear that once India conducted its nuclear tests Pakistan seemed to have little choice but to respond. Unless matters are quickly controlled South Asia, one of the poorest regions in the world, could be seeing the start of a nuclear arms race. Considering the high tension between the two countries and the religious zeal that has fed into the nuclear programme, the chances of the world's first nuclear exchange are high.

The strategy of sanctions will not work, as they hit the poor and will simply exacerbate the many problems facing South Asia. It reflects the neo-imperialist attitude of some Western countries.

We need to identify the urgent problems in the context of South Asia and resolve them. The first of these is Kashmir. It has an ongoing freedom movement, ignored by the world, and the people of Kashmir have suffered too long and lost too many lives. United Nations Resolutions have been ignored for too long.

We need to make sure that both countries ensure the security of smaller countries and that of the minorities in their midst.

All the members of the nuclear club must now commit themselves to a nuclear-free world. They must recognise that the old club rules no longer apply.

Pakistan's nuclear tests will be seen in many parts of the world with a great deal of discomfort. The general Islamophobia fuels fears of an "Islamic bomb". But for most Pakistanis they are seen as a major step towards national security and dignity.

We believe that South Asia is at a crossroads and if it moves towards self-destruction it will draw in the entire planet. However, the very seriousness of the crisis means that the world cannot ignore the problems of the Subcontinent any longer; this is the one silver lining that we must explore. We believe those of goodwill should support the movement to restore peace and sanity to South Asia and encourage India and Pakistan to divert their resources to tackling poverty. The strategy needs to

be global, urgent and implemented on several fronts simultaneously. There is no time to lose.

Professor AKBAR AHMED
Fellow, Selwyn College, Cambridge
Professor KHURSHID AHMED
(Former senator, Vice President, Jamiat-i-Islami, Pakistan)
The Rev Dr EDWARD CONDREY
Rector of Rugby
Sir OLIVER FORSTER
(High Commissioner to Pakistan 1979-84)

ASH KARIM
SHAHED SADULLAH
Editor, The News
IMAN ABDUL SAJJID
Director, Islamic Centre, Brighton
MOHAMMED SARWAR MP
(Glasgow Govan, Lab)
JAMES SHERA
Lord WEATHERILL
Cambridge

Sir: Peter Popham's account of Muslim-Hindu relations on the Subcontinent is dangerously misleading (Comment, 1 June).

Of the many inaccuracies in his piece, which reads as an apology for some of the more extravagant Hindu nationalist claims, one could cite the image of Tamberlane as a Muslim fundamentalist hell-bent on slaying Hindus; a claim which ignores the fact that he murdered all those who opposed him, including much of the largely Muslim population of Central Asia.

The suggestion that Indians converted to Islam from fear of Muslim violence ignores the consensus among Western scholars who attribute the conversions to the preaching of pacific Muslim mystics, and the desire to escape the rigours of the caste system.

A more even-handed analysis would have added to the historical record Islam's rich contributions to Indian culture. The Taj Mahal and the Red Fort, and much of Indian dress, vocabulary, literature and

LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number
Fax: 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

music would have been unimaginable without Muslim influence. All these cultural forms testify to the capacity of India to synthesise Islamic and Hindu elements to create the region's distinctive identity.

The "nationalist historians" Popham cites regard that synthesis as a contamination of the country's pristine "essence", and demand the marginalising of Islamic culture, coupled to an aggressive stance towards Pakistan. The nuclear arms race now under way is part of that process, which can only be defused by the rejection of the xenophobic and absurd readings of history now emanating from right-wing Hindu circles.

TIM WINTER
Lecturer in Islamic Studies
University of Cambridge

Gazza: the moral

Sir: You say ("Don't cry for Gazza", leading article, 2 June) that Gazza's reputation as the most talented player of his generation "tells us more about that generation's abilities than anything else". This comment puts into perspective England's hopes in the coming World Cup.

That an unfit 31-year-old with a nicotine, alcohol and kebab dependency is so vital to the team demonstrates the weakness both of our national squad and the game in this country. The tears of the nation are not for Gazza, but for the dearth of real footballing ability in this country. Huddle's sacking of our only really creative player has merely brought this sad reality into sudden, sharp focus.

There are hundreds of "fit" players in the Premiership for Huddle to choose from and he, like Graham Taylor, seems to prefer industry to art. With Gazza in the squad we still wouldn't win the World Cup, but I, for one, would prefer to lose with style.

MATT PASTERFIELD
London N1

Sir: Suzanne Moore takes an article spread across four columns (Comment, 3 June) to tell us that Gazza is not a good role model for young men. It is true that some young men get stuck in perpetual adolescence. So do some young women. It is true that some men abuse their partners. So do some women. I look forward to Suzanne Moore's (surely) forthcoming article on bad role models for girls.

JOHN TIPPLER
Spalding, Lincolnshire

Sir: Three events in recent days have filled me with joy. First you reported that Damien Hirst was old hat; then that one of the Spice Girls had quit; and finally that Gazza has been dropped from England's World Cup team. Is this the beginning of the end of Laddism (and Girl Power)? Could there be a backlash emerging against dumbing down and the encouragement of yob culture we have suffered since Thatcherism and now with Blairism?

PETER BERGER
Bristol

Hanging on the line

Sir: Whilst baying sympathy for the pressured staff of call centres who have only 10 seconds' break between answering calls (report, 2 June), I am pleased that some attempt is being made by companies operating these systems to minimise the time I have to pay for the privilege of listening to piped music from Sunderland or Glasgow.

Recently a call to my local cinema to reserve seats resulted in a peak-rate call to Inverness which cost almost 10 per cent of the price of the tickets. I am increasingly attracted to companies which offer Freefone numbers.

R S LETCH
Maulden, Bedfordshire

Lottery addiction

Sir: Whilst your leading article (3 June) remonstrating against the worst effects of the National Lottery is timely, I fear your prescription of redress is mere wishful thinking.

For too many the Lottery has become the only focus of hope-against-hope for a better life. Gambling is a form of abuse: money abuse. To have made a crippling and demoralising mass addiction the price for subsidising someone else's idea of a good cause was always a cynical manoeuvre. The only remedy now lies not in some "educational" programme but in separating licensed gaming from the support of charities.

MALCOLM ROSS
Darlington, Devon

Sir: The alarmist tone of your leading article overlooks the scale of lottery playing throughout the world. The per capita sales in the UK are 24th on the international list. In 1997 we spent only £98 a head, whereas South Dakota achieved £463.

The ills you describe are not apparent in New York, which spent £138 per person last year, Norway a similar amount and Massachusetts £322. The difference is that all these hugely successful lotteries did not need to lose hundreds of millions of pounds in profits to their operators, because their laws are better framed. Ofset is legally required to maximise the funds to the good causes, yet mistakenly accepts that large profits are the only way of running a successful lottery.

DENIS VAUGHAN
Executive Director
The Lottery Promotion Company
London WC2

Sock mystery solved

Sir: Your report about the S&M sock fetishists and their hoard of 10,000 socks (3 June) was a great relief to those of us who have been puzzled for years about the inexplicable disappearance of odd socks from laundrettes and domestic washing machines. Can the police now return my much-cherished Homer Simpson and Gazza socks (size 10)?

DAN WILLIAMS
Southend-on-Sea, Essex

Yesterday's men? Don't worry, they'll soon be back in the news



MILES KINGSTON

WE'RE NOT going to have another piece about Paul Gascoigne today, I hope?

No. Paul Gascoigne is yesterday's news. Yesterday's news is here today and gone tomorrow.

And gone for ever?

Certainly not. Yesterday's news always comes back when you have forgotten all about it. Sometimes it comes back as "Where Are They Now?" Sometimes it comes back as material for quizzes. Sometimes it only comes back as an obituary. But it always comes back. Have you ever noticed the way Myra Hindley returns endlessly to the headlines? Or Edwina Currie?

Yes. But there never seems to be any good reason for their hitting the news again.

There isn't. It is simply a case of yesterday's news coming back again, even if nothing has happened to cause it. Yesterday's news, whether it is news about Lord Lucan or the Great Train Robbery,

always comes back like Halley's Comet. It's certainly true that news fades. The other day I saw a heading in *The Spectator*, saying "Michael Howard reviews *Gitta Sereny's book on Mary Bell*", and I thought to myself: Heavens above! How quickly we forget names that were once in the news!

Quite. Last year Michael Howard was reviled by all, and now he is forgotten. Except by *The Spectator*, of course. The last issue of *The Spectator* I saw, there was a full page article by Michael Howard's wife. Expect pieces by the Howard children any day now.

No, not Michael Howard — I was really thinking of Mary Bell. A week or two ago she was national enemy No 1, for making money out of a murder. Now she is forgotten again. Can things change so quickly?

They can in tabloid time. Tabloid time is different from real time. It moves much faster. It is governed by boredom. When people get bored, time moves on.

When the readers get bored, you mean?

No. When the editor gets bored. But with Mary Bell, it was slightly different. She was being exonerated for taking money for talking about a crime. A couple of days later all the tabloids were falling over each other in an effort to pour money on two nurses who had committed murders. Even the tabloids could see there was an element of hypocrisy here, so they back-pedalled on Mary Bell.

Murders? But the nurses said they were innocent.

Sure. So did O J Simpson. So did Louise Woodward. So does everyone charged with murder. But don't forget that the nurses were found guilty in a court of law.

Yes — a Saudi court of law!

You think they would have fared any better here? In the country which gave justice to the Birmingham Six? Which behaved so well over Stephen Lawrence?

Yes, but...

Where Michael Howard spent half his time releasing and pardoning people who had been in prison most of their lives?

I thought you said that Michael Howard was out of the news? That's twice we've mentioned him!

Ah, but Michael Howard is only in the news because of Ann Widdecombe! Ann Widdecombe became famous when she dished Michael Howard's chances of becoming Tory leader. She was in the news again this week when she was promoted to the Tory front bench, prompting papers to ask, "How Will Anne and Michael Get On at the Same Table?". Another shining example of papers asking questions to which they have no answer. It's also a shining example of newspapers treating politics as soap opera, as if Widdecombe was only famous for disliking Howard. Most journalists can only understand or explain

politics when it is presented as a soap.

Explain. A lot of newsprint is expended on the supposed rivalry between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, between Ann Widdecombe and Michael Howard, between Thatcher and everyone, between Ted Heath and everyone else, on Peter Mandelson and Alastair Campbell, on Robin Cook and the F O.

Yes. And?

And nobody except the journalists gives a toss. It really bores the public rigid. It is the one great example of editors getting it wrong. Because THEY are mesmerised by politics as soap opera, they think the public will be as well. Do YOU think anyone remotely cares how Ann Widdecombe and Michael Howard behave towards each other? In the real world?

You're asking me? A reader? A question? You're right. I shouldn't have. Sorry. Not at all.

هكذا من الأصل

Could poverty lead students to prostitution and drug dealing?



DAVID
AARONOVITCH

WHEN I was a student back in the mid-Seventies, I was so poor that I could not even afford to buy my own cocaine. This wasn't a great tragedy because I was too scared to take cocaine anyway (it rots the nose off, apparently), so instead I smoked other people's cannabis and cultivated an ability to get very drunk on two rum and cokes.

Despite these cost-cutting strategies I was very hard up. Each day I calculated whether or not I had enough money for the return bus fare between digs and college, a packet of ten Park Drive, a cream cheese sandwich, a cup of coffee and two games of table football. Sometimes I didn't. For six months I wore someone else's clothes, including, on a couple of not-to-be-forgotten occasions, their underpants.

I shan't say I was happy but, whatever my tribulations, they seem to have been minor when compared to those of students today. In the last few weeks the new president of the National Union of Students (a post I filled in 1980) has talked of students who are so poor that they are actually suffering from malnutrition. Well, we didn't have that in my day.

Nor did many of my generation work our passage through college. Yet, in 1996 a NUS survey claimed that "many students are forced to skip lectures and miss essay deadlines to spend more and more time working in pubs, burger bars, shops and factories". My generation of students had no such excuses for missing lectures and deadlines. No such excuses, but we still missed them.

The terrible consequences of this modern impoverishment seemed to be on display this week at Isleworth Crown Court. Ms Hannah Thompson, a Young Musician of The Year semi-finalist in 1992, is on trial for smuggling half a million quid's worth of Brazilian cocaine into Britain. According to one account yesterday Ms Thompson, a violinist, apparently took to drug-smuggling "after drink and drugs shattered her self-esteem, and crippling student loans meant she could not even afford to repair her recording equipment".

Now, I have no wish to quarrel with this report, though a pedant might point out that loans don't cripple—it's debts that cripple. But be that as it may, the case suddenly reminded me of a BBC news item that I'd seen at the weekend, in which award-winning reporter Sue Lloyd Roberts had been investigating the phenomenon of student prostitution. Ms Lloyd Roberts (most famous for her undercover work in China) discovered a young student woman with a fuzzy face, down to her bra in a semi somewhere in the Home Counties, and a fuzzy student boy who rented himself out a £150 a throw. (Well, maybe not a throw.) The suggestion was clear, student financial hardship was leading more of our bright young things to take part in the sex industry.

Further evidence for this includes revelations about the student daughter of a politician, and a report of the establishment of a student male escort agency, being set up by a graduate of Peterhouse, Cambridge. The student newspaper of the University of London, *London Student*, agrees with this proposition, arguing that "the increasing media profile of prostitution amongst students indicates that this is a method of paying for university education that is becoming more attractive to students as a supplement to their diminishing grant".

So there we have it—malnutrition, drug-smuggling and prostitution—and all as the consequence of inadequate student grants and loans. And, presumably, there but for the Grace of God go I. Had I studied a couple of decades later, then perhaps I too might be sticking up cards in phone boxes advertising the exotic services of Slim Dave, or running round London with my turn-ups full of pills, powders and resins.

All right, I'm sceptical. Not about whether students are poor—I'm sure that many are. The fact that union bars do great business and that college car-parks are full of shiny little sports cars tells you only that those youngsters with rich parents are often doing better than ever before. But tell me, are the poor ones so very much poorer than the poor ones 20 years ago?

In those days part-time work was less of an option. There was no culture of it, especially after the tradition of helping out with the Christmas post was abolished in the early Seventies. We had weeny grants and went into debt with the bank. Now they have weeny grants-plus-loans and go into debt with the bank. Allowing for all sources of finance (including McJobs), there is little evidence that student living standards have declined markedly in absolute terms.

There is little evidence student living standards have declined markedly

But other things may have changed. The first is that I cost almost nothing to clothe when I was 20, and my chattels were minimal. No Walkers, no telly, no CD player (just an old deck), no trainers, no labels, no foreign holidays, no car. And most of my contemporaries had none of these things either. And we did not go on the game.

Or so I assumed. But then a friend told me of a meeting with a woman who had been a student at the same time as me, up in Scotland. And she had combined a philosophy degree, with a highly remunerative sideline in escorting businessmen to clubs and hotel rooms. From Heidelberg to Hello Dears.

So, if we are hearing more about it now, it may not be solely the result of hardship. Part of it could be because we are more aware than we used to be of how easily money can be earned this way. Significantly, at the end of Sue Lloyd Roberts' report, she revealed that her semi-girl was now considering giving up her university course altogether, so lucrative was it being a high-class call-girl.

And part of it could also be that—in those days—no one would have owned up to it. Whereas, in these up-front days, if you don't flaunt it, it's usually because you don't have it.

Even Andy Warhol was once just an anxious-to-please young man



JOHN
WALSH

Good God, they're actually blaming the kebab. Of all the things that might have contributed to Paul Gascoigne's being dropped from the World Cup squad—unfitness, incomprehensibility, indolence, steel rods in the tibia, dodgy ligaments, Marlboro Lights, smashed cheekbone, fondness for Newcastle Brown Ale, thigh strain (caused, apparently, by "getting out of bed"), friendship with Rod Stewart, tendonitis, compulsive desire to look for sympathy round at his ex-wife's house—they're blaming his downfall on a lump of grilled chicken in some pitta bread.

Poor Mr Ibrahim Ibnou-Cheikh, the proprietor of the Palm Cafe Kebab shop in London's Brewer Street, is himself being grilled by the London press as the man who served Gascoigne a chicken kebab (with chilli sauce) and precipitated his downfall, when the fun-loving midfielder's late-night snack was snapped on camera by some opportunistic student busybody and published in the *Mirror* as evidence that Gascoigne had thrown away the last vestige of health, sense and sanity. "People are saying it was a lamb schwarma but it was a little bit of chicken and no chips," Ibrahim told the *Evening Standard*, defensively. "I guarantee it didn't do him any harm, my friend."

Note how those words "my friend" carry a sinister whiff of the souk about them. But it would be a crying shame if Gascoigne's career were to be ruined just for indulging in what is now a national dish such as Meat Rogan Josh has now become more typically British than Fidget Pie). For many, the kebab is a marvellous, if guilty, luxury on Friday nights, when you've had one or two fortifying aperitifs (well, 17 actually, and in straight glasses) and the warm strip lights of the Abrakadabra or the Ali Khan



Andy Warhol in his pre-Factory days, New York, 1950

Photograph: Leila Davies Singeles

takeaway beckon from across the street like a Port Said hooker. It is a delightful and nutritious dish, full of protein and, er, enzymes and so forth, of lamb or chicken accompanied by a piquant, incendiary sauce and a light, low-calorie salad and encased in a wholemeal envelope. It couldn't be healthier.

A nutritionist once told me that the long, table-drum skewers of meat that you see in Shaftesbury Avenue having bis sawn off them by Turkish swordsmen are probably as healthy as roadside cuisine gets, because all the bacteria that breed in their folds are burnt to cinders. And its magical laxative properties—precisely calibrated to suit the average interval between devouring the last shred of tepid kebab fibre and visiting the lavatory—is now just 14.8 seconds—should recommend it to any fast-moving sports icon with no use for a sluggish metabolism.

On the subject of food and celebrity... Despite the departure of Geri Halliwell, the Spice Girls are going ahead with their 40 American gigs. But according to one mischievous rock impresario, they may be legally bound to display signs at each

concert offering fans a refund, if only of 20 per cent because of the non appearance of the huxom Ginger. But once you start thinking in percentages, where does it stop?

I rushed to my local Sainsbury's. By the bread section, there was the Spice Girls Cake (£7.99, serves 12, and has "the first-ever edible photographic image" on the top), but nobody had yet thought to chop a one-fifth wedge out of it and reduce the price by £1.59. The lawyers will be onto them soon.

In the Snacks and Nibbles aisle, staff have not yet been through the Walkers crisp packs, taking 20 per cent of Spice Girl spud out of the ones still displaying the doomed quintet in their glory, and dropping the price to 20p. I was distracted by a "Ginger Spice Spiced Sponge Cake Baking Kit", which puzzlingly featured no sign of the flame-haired chanteuse on the label and made no allusion to music or Girl Power or the constancy of female friendship on the packaging. Had they just forgotten? Then I realised (rather sheepishly) that it was a ginger spiced sponge cake baking kit.

After checking the dozen other Spice Girls endorsements that will need adjusting, a

thought struck me. I nipped round to the Home Medicines department but, amazingly, nobody had yet approached Ms Halliwell to flag the one thing with which she's now associated. It is time for a celebrity-endorsed gastro-enteritis cure? I can see it now: "Upset tummy? Reduce your Spice Level by 20 per cent..."

The Andy Warhol exhibition at the Barbican is an extraordinary hymn to blankness, a succession of things to look at and walk around, all of them eliciting the response, "So...?" We are invited to inspect the biscuity wool suit, the shirt and tie and lace-up boots he bought in Hong Kong, and we duly look into their inner recesses but they refuse to disclose any deeper meaning. As for the black turtle-neck, the black jeans and sneakers... Anyone else's clothes get given to Oxfam or the Salvation Army after their demise: with Andy, they become part of the archive. We look at the photo-booth pictures of Gerald Malanga and Edie Sedgwick and Andy himself (a self-portrait!) and think, anyone else's photo-booth pictures tend to wind up in faded albums or in the bottom drawer of the filing cabinet.

We look at bits and bobs from the rest of his life, his corsets and wigs and cosmetics, even the Aspergum and Senokot in his medicine cabinet and listen to his phone calls, and clock his collection of Brillo and Del Monte cardboard boxes and his Polaroids of Factory parties, and the studied look of non-involvement on his face as he is embraced by Candy Darling or Jackie Curtis, a look that says, "Get me away from these bloody people"—and you end up with a tragic case: a loner who was always stuck with an entourage, an artist so famously lacking a private essence that his public life was exploded into a thousand bits that got memorialised separately, down to his socks. He was a man deconstructed by fame.

Early in the exhibition, however, you find signs of the man who preceded the loner and rather attractive they are too: his shoe fetishism (he drew shoe designs with a deep voluptuous "V" like a cleavage), his sprightly Fifties graphics like Ronald Searle cartoons, with cute cherubs and spindly angels. There's a snap of him walking through Greenwich Village looking quite unlike himself (and weirdly like Truman Capote) in a preppy bow-tie and glasses, carrying a portfolio and an anxious-to-please expression.

And there's a tableau of his early life, where you can make out a note sent by Anna Mei Walltowitch, his agent, on Dec 11 1957, which reads: "Dear Andy, Enclosed in check no 99 for \$491.25 in payment for the finished drawings of Playmouth's 16-page booklet done for N.W. Ayer. Less commission of 25%. Yrs truly...". You can just imagine him, five years before his self-invention as the Factory artist, feeling genuine pleasure in a way he wasn't to feel it again, at getting paid a few hundred bucks for his drawings, just (pshaw!) in time for Christmas.

If you were Slobodan Milosevic, here's what you'd be thinking



RUPERT
CORNWELL

DEJA VU all over again? So it would seem, six years after the Bosnian conflict began. Once more, history is repeating itself as tragedy, as Serbian security forces seal off and "cleanse" tracts of Balkan countryside.

Slobodan Milosevic, the last

despot of old Eastern Europe, purveyor of his own patented blend of failed socialism and rancid nationalism, is again playing at war, this time in Serbia's mostly Albanian province of Kosovo.

Entire villages are laid waste, hundreds may be dead, while tens of thousands of refugees are reported fleeing for sanctuary in neighbouring Albania proper. As in 1992, the West wrings its hands and threatens sanctions, but seems no more willing than before to risk blood and treasure to put an end to the rampage.

Such is the former Yugoslavia, as viewed by the world—a place incapable of change, where medieval hatreds invariably triumph over new millennium reason. But stop for an instant, pretend you are

Mr Milosevic and consider the former Yugoslavia from the vantage point of Belgrade. The panorama is one of unrelieved disaster.

The vision of the Greater Serbia you dangled before your people is a mockery. You are virtually isolated within Europe, your economy is a wreck. Thanks to the conflicts you helped unleash, Slovenia has gone, Croatia has gone, Macedonia has gone and Bosnia has gone.

Apart from Serbia itself, only tiny Montenegro remains of the six republics of Tito's federation—and last weekend you watched as your man in Montenegro was roundly defeated by a reformer, Milo Djukanovic, who says he will carry his market-oriented economic policies, and his strategy of rapprochement with

Europe, into Serbia itself. And this time you cannot complain the elections were rigged. On the streets below you the mutterings are starting: why not a reformer here as well?

And contrary to appearances, this time NATO will be no pushover. True, in Brussels yesterday, the alliance was taking its time. But, and you know it, NATO has learnt the lesson of Bosnia—that words backed by deeds, the bluff which you can call, only guarantee disaster. And this time the stakes are higher.

Bosnia was ghastly, but there was never great danger of the fighting spreading much further afield. This time it just could: to Albania, obviously, and to Macedonia where a quarter of the population is ethnic Albanian, and thence to Bulgaria,

Greece and Turkey. An unlikely scenario, admittedly, but another reason why NATO will act to contain the conflict and—as a last resort—intervene to stop it.

Yet the nationalist passions you have stoked propel you forward.

Your best bet, you have calculated, is this early, large scale and ruthless strike against the insurgents. That way perhaps you will be able to restart "negotiations" over the future of the province from a position of strength.

But will your people stand for much more of this, especially if the Western allies cut off the outside investment that was the best chance of hauling your economy out of the doldrums? Sooner or later they will find out that the Western powers do not advocate independence for Kosovo along

Bosnian lines; merely a return of the special status the province enjoyed until you removed it in 1989. Small wonder then, if the Belgrade newspaper report is true, you've just had to sack 100 Belgrade policemen who refused service in Kosovo. Nationalism no longer blinds all eyes.

You are, in short, in a sorry pass, engaged in a war of no profit, with the progressive Mr Djukanovic on your doorstep. None of which portends your immediate demise. You are a tactician and survivor of great cunning, ready to do the worst to achieve your ends.

But history's wheel is coming full circle. In Kosovo, you fired the starter's gun for this round of Balkan wars. In Kosovo they will end—and, perhaps, your own malign political career as well.

PANDORA

Faber's nemesis

IS SOMEBODY trying to finish off Tory MP David Faber's career once and for all? First he was sacked as Tory shadow Foreign Office spokesman on "the rest of the world" in William Hague's reshuffle. Yesterday, if that wasn't dire enough, an anonymous "press release" mysteriously found its way to the hacks at Westminster. Purporting to be a defence of Faber, it includes such hapless lines as "He is certainly no worse than many others on the front bench and recently had been performing well..."

It went on to make the ludicrous suggestion that Faber could have been sacked because his name was found in the visitor's book of a "PR girl" whom Hague supposedly fancied some years ago. Unfortunately, there

were some backs who concluded that this "release" had been written by Faber himself. When Pandora rang Faber and asked him point-blank if this was so, his denial was unyielding. "No, no, no. You must be joking. I haven't said a word."

Modern puds

SARA LEE, the Chicago-based frozen pastry corporation whose products are widely sold in Britain, yesterday announced its donation of 40 modern paintings worth \$100m to various US museums. Foremost among the works is a Matisse called *Lemons on a Pewter Plate*. Pandora is thinking of commissioning Damien Hirst to do a copy called *Lemon Cheesecake in Formaldehyde Syrup*.

Lunch is off

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL, the Prime Minister's press chief, lives a Spartan life at Downing Street and turns down scores of lunch invites. Indeed Pandora believes that he has lunched with only one journalist since the election. That one journalist since the election, that was Kelvin McKenzie of *Mirror* Group and was clearly a great success for the Government. After hiring Paul Routledge as its chief political commentator last week, the *Mirror* headlined his debut with: "Achtung! Alastair... He's Coming Your Way Soon!" But presumably not for a meal.

Dole is up

THINGS are looking up for the former American Vice-President Bob Dole.

who failed dismally to unseat Bill Clinton in the last US election. American newspapers have reported that Dole was an early test recipient of Viagra, the male sexual wonder drug. Speaking a few days ago in Washington at the 22nd reunion of Gerald Ford's White House team, Dole told the former President "There's an old saying—you're as young as you feel. And if you have any doubt about it, I have a great drug I can recommend."

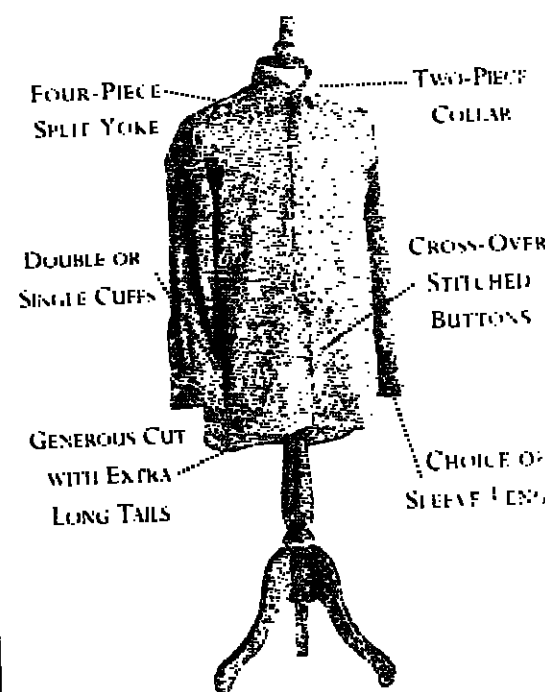
Dome privileges

ONE of the many claims of the Millennium Dome planners has been that it will be a "car-free site". Residents of the Borough of Greenwich have been assured that they won't be locked into a hellish traffic

grid-lock. The new Jubilee Line is being pushed to complete by the Dome's opening day and there has been endless utopian hype about turning the River Thames into a "highway" for visitors to "cruise".

How intriguing, then, to read Peter Mandelson's detailed written answer to Tory MP Norman Baker's question about parking at the Dome. It seems there will be 247 parking spaces for VIPs. As Pandora's Canary Wharf office overlooks Mandy's folly, it will be interesting to see how many ministers' cars find their way into those VIP slots. In other words, watch this space.

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Murphy said the move would cut the company's costs of capital

NFC returns a quarter of its value to shareholders

By Peter Thal Larsen

THE TRANSPORT group NFC yesterday became the latest company to hand back cash to shareholders in a move which will see them receive £307m, representing a quarter of the company's market value.

In a complex move, NFC plans to issue new shares to investors which will then be cancelled in return for cash. It will then consolidate its remaining share capital, so that shareholders will receive three new shares and 176p in cash for every four shares they currently hold.

Gerry Murphy, chief executive, said NFC wanted to return the proceeds of its disposal programme, which has raised £250m in the past twelve months, to its shareholders. He said the move will also increase the amount of debt on NFC's balance sheet. This will reduce the company's cost of capital, because debt is cheaper to service than equity. "We will now have a rational capital structure and a sensible cost of capital," he said.

Analysts calculated that the cash distribution would take NFC's balance sheet gearing to about 80 per cent by the end of

its financial year in September. Profits are likely to cover its interest bill about six times.

Mr Murphy said the debt burden was not too heavy, because the group did not have any immediate plans for acquisitions.

NFC is understood to have opted for a complex distribution to avoid a large tax bill. A straightforward share buy-back would have required it to pay approximately £60m to the government in Advance Corporation Tax – a sum it is unlikely ever to recoup. Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, is planning to phase out ACT next year. Analysts were generally upbeat about

the move, which had been expected after NFC sold off a string of peripheral businesses. NFC shares closed up 3.5p to 181.5p.

At the same time, however, NFC said it was planning to cut its full-year dividend to 5p per share, compared to the 7.1p the group paid out last year. The company aims to have its dividend covered twice by earnings per share.

The move came as NFC announced a 4 per cent jump in profits before tax and exceptional items, to £51.9m, for the six months to March 31. Turnover edged up 2 per cent to £1.09bn.

Mr Murphy said the cash distribution ended a lengthy period during which the company has restructured heavily. "It's been about three years since I joined NFC. During that time we have been trying to reshape the business," he said, adding that NFC was now "narrower and lighter".

He added that the company's operations in continental Europe, which reduced operating losses from £4.7m to £1.8m in the period, was likely to break even next year. The American businesses, where profits jumped 26 per cent to £12.9m, were "firing on all cylinders".

Railtrack shares leap on link deal

By Michael Harrison

THE CITY yesterday gave the thumbs-up to the deal struck between Railtrack and the Government to rescue the £3.5bn Channel Tunnel Rail Link.

Shares in Railtrack raced ahead as the operator of the national rail network announced that it had reached an agreement to take over the 68-mile link in two stages at a cost of £3.3bn.

Under a complex financing plan announced in the Commons, the Government will effectively guarantee a £3.7bn bond issued by the developers of the project, London and Continental Railways, to complete construction of the link from the Kent coast into London's St Pancras station.

The bond issue will be in addition to the £1.8bn of public

subsidy already committed to the project.

Railtrack has agreed to acquire the first phase of the link, from the tunnel to Ebbsfleet in north Kent, for £1.5bn in 2003. It has also taken an option to buy the second, more expensive phase of the link into St Pancras, for £1.8bn in 2006.

Railtrack will make a profit from the access charges British Airways and National Express will pay to operate Eurostar services between London, Paris and Brussels. The Government has agreed to fund £140m of the access charges between 2010 and 2020 if there is insufficient passenger income to cover Eurostar's payments to Railtrack.

City advisers involved in the restructuring of the deal estimated that by agreeing to underwrite the bond with its own credit rating, the Government

could save £1.2bn in financing charges. This is equivalent to the amount of extra subsidy that LCR asked for in January and which the Government refused, casting doubt over the future of the rail link.

Railtrack's chief executive, Gerald Corbett, said it would have an incentive to build and take over the second phase of the link because it will be allowed to earn a bigger rate of return under the access charge agreement signed with the Government.

In return, the Government will take a 35 per cent stake in LCR, which will retain any profits above and beyond the access charges levied by Railtrack, and a 5 per cent stake in the Eurostar operation.

Railtrack and the Government are forecasting that passenger numbers on Eurostar will rise from 6 million last year

to between 7.5m and 8 million when the first phase of the high-speed link opens in 2003 and double to more than 12 million once the link goes to St Pancras. Railtrack shares rose 41p – more than 3 per cent – as details of the rescue plan emerged.

Railtrack, which has been heavily attacked in the past by ministers for its bumper profits, could negotiate a ground-breaking deal with the Government on such an important and high-profile project.

By backing the bond with its credit rating, the Government is likely to shave financing costs by two percentage points which is worth £120m a year on a £6bn project. Although a commercial issue, the bond will in effect act like a gift. When Railtrack repays the bond to the Government its cost of capital will be higher but this will be more than covered by the access charges it will levy.

Meanwhile Railtrack dis-

closed that it is to increase its investment spending on the rest of the rail network by 16 per cent to £1.45bn this year and complete the refurbishment of half its stations by next year and all of them by 2001.

This came as it brought forward its full-year results by a day, announcing that pre-tax profits last year rose 12 per cent to £388m on turnover of £2.4bn. The final dividend was increased to 16p, making an increase for the year of 8.6 per cent.

The lobby group Save our Railways attacked the news claiming that Railtrack was making more than £1m a day on taxpayers' subsidies of £5m a day. Its campaign director Jonathan Bray said Railtrack was "little more than a gigantic money laundering machine turning public subsidy into private profit".

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Official underwriting of bond saves £1.2bn in financing, say City advisers

Chris Tarry, transport analyst with Dresner Kleinwort Benson, said it was "pretty satisfactory" from Railtrack's standpoint. "It is an important signal that Britain will have a growing rail network and it represents a significant opportunity for Railtrack given the incentives that are built in to construct the second phase of the link."

Other analysts said the agreement demonstrated that

credit rating, the Government is likely to shave financing costs by two percentage points which is worth £120m a year on a £6bn project. Although a commercial issue, the bond will in effect act like a gift. When Railtrack repays the bond to the Government its cost of capital will be higher but this will be more than covered by the access charges it will levy.

Meanwhile Railtrack dis-

'Rift' claims as Treasury chief retires

By Les Paterson

Sir Terence Burns, the most senior civil servant at the Treasury, is to take early retirement, prompting renewed speculation about a rift between the Treasury and Gordon Brown, the Chancellor.

The 54-year-old permanent secretary to the Treasury is to step down at the end of the month, and will receive a life peerage.

Sir Terence, brought into the Treasury by Baroness Thatcher in 1980, will be replaced by Andrew Turnbull, 53, permanent secretary to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, and a former Treasury official.

Mr Brown, whose officials have continually played down rumours of disagreements with Sir Terence, called the Treasury's top official "one of our country's outstanding post-war economists and public servants".

The Chancellor said: "I know that the Treasury – and chancellors of both parties – have reason to be grateful for the expertise, wisdom and quiet resilience he has brought to the job of Permanent Secretary. I am pleased to count Terry not only as an adviser, but as a friend."

Sir Terence said: "I have decided that now is the right time to consider a fresh challenge and a different mix of responsibilities in the next period of my working life."

Francis Maude, the newly appointed shadow Chancellor,

called Sir Terence "the most senior civil servant to date of Labour's instinct for riding roughshod over the Civil Service".

Mr Maude said: "Time after time, Gordon Brown has ignored Sir Terry's advice. Time after time, the permanent secretary has been excluded from policy discussions by Mr Blair's coterie of advisers. No wonder Sir Terry has decided that enough is enough."

Observers say Sir Terence, a former economics lecturer, failed to shake off his Thatcherite image and was repeatedly squeezed out of key policy discussions by the Chancellor's "inner circle".

"He was always seen as Thatcher's man," remarked one source.

Andrew Turnbull, Sir Terence's replacement, was formerly deputy permanent secretary to the Treasury, and was principal private secretary to both John Major and Lady Thatcher. He was a key member of Norman Lamont's Treasury team in 1992, when sterling was forced out of the European exchange rate mechanism.

More recently, Mr Turnbull interviewed for the position of Cabinet Secretary, the most senior Civil Servant post. The post eventually went to Sir Richard Wilson.

Sir Richard Mottram, the other candidate for the Cabinet Secretary's post and currently permanent secretary at the Ministry of Defence, will replace Mr Turnbull at the Department of Environment.

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End of the road for Rolls enthusiasts' bid

By Michael Harrison

VICKERS all but closed the door yesterday on a rival bid for Rolls-Royce Motor Cars from a group of enthusiasts by saying that tomorrow's meeting to approve the £430m sale of the business to Volkswagen of Germany would almost certainly go ahead.

Crewe Motors, the consortium of Rolls-Royce and Bentley owners attempting to put together a last-minute bid, said yesterday that it still hoped to table an offer by Friday.

The consortium's advisers have had discussions with Vickers' financial advisers Lazard Brothers and a bid of more than £430m has been discussed.

But Michael Shrimpton,

the barrister heading Crewe Motors, said it would take longer than Friday to secure letters of credit and other legally binding assurances from his backers, said to include a British clearing bank and a US billionaire.

"What I can't promise is to match VW this week," Mr Shrimpton said.

In the absence of a cast-iron unconditional bid, Vickers will proceed with its extraordinary shareholders' meeting, due to take place tomorrow morning at the Royal Horticultural Halls in central London.

"We still have not got a formal offer so we are going ahead as planned," said a Vickers spokesman. "We do not take kindly to the idea of postponing the meeting

and we cannot see that it will be knocked off course."

If the meeting went ahead and shareholders approved the sale of R-RMC to VW then would be the end of the matter. "There comes a point at which we reach the end of the road and that would be it," the spokesman added.

Earlier this week Vickers said that if the meeting was delayed then the earliest the sale could be completed was September. That would create risks and uncertainties for the business.

Vickers says that the total value of the VW bid is likely to be between £460m and £470m including working capital injected into R-RMC since the start of the year which the German car-maker will fund.

Andersen ends talks with leading solicitors

By Roger Trapp

ACCOUNTANCY firm Arthur Andersen's attempt to break into the upper tier of the UK legal market has ended in acrimonious failure, with the calling off of talks with City solicitors Wilde Sapte.

The two firms issued a joint statement yesterday, but it is clear that the initiative came from Andersen.

The firm, which has been making serious inroads into the legal field through setting up an associate firm under the name Garrett and acquiring the Scottish practice Dundas & Wilson, claimed that the defection of two Wilde Sapte partners to rival firm Allen & Overy meant the deal was not what it appeared when merger talks were announced in March.

However, Stephen Blundell, Wilde Sapte's marketing partner, said the departure of those partners was not as significant as that of their former team leader, Graham Smith, who announced he was moving to Allen & Overy before the talks began.

He added that other concerns about the proposed merger with an organisation that employs more than 100,000 people around the world – notably from the Paris office and from practice areas with significant potential conflicts – had been there since the talks began.

Nick Prentice, Andersen's European managing partner for tax and legal services, explained the decision by saying that he and his colleagues had been attracted to Wilde Sapte's "excellent reputation in

banking and finance and their international strength". However, he added: "Our objective to form a merged firm of the highest quality by allaying these strengths to those of our own legal network depended on the original elements of the transaction being preserved intact. We regret that our discussions will not now proceed as intended."

Had the deal gone ahead, Wilde Sapte, a respected City firm with more than 70 partners and 600 staff, would have helped Andersen into the top five in terms of worldwide coverage, with 1,400 lawyers operating in about 30 countries.

Andersen already has the largest law firm in Spain and a significant presence in other mainland European countries.

Backing for MPs who oppose betting link-up

LADBROKE's acquisition of the Coral betting shop chain from Bass is likely to act against the public interest, according to a report commissioned by MPs opposing the merger.

The consultants Economica found the acquisition will reduce competition, disadvantage the customer, and make it tougher for independent betting shops and small chains to compete. The study comes a month before a Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on which Margaret Beckett, Trade and Industry Secretary, will base her ruling on Ladbroke's £375.5m acquisition.

Ladbroke's purchase of the 891-strong Coral chain was completed in May and gives it

a 36 per cent share of the UK retail betting market. The company has already sold 133 shops to satisfy anti-trust concerns. Further disposals could erode the scope for cost-savings.

"My best guess is the MMC will come out and say Ladbroke has got to sell X amount of shops," said Roy Owens, an analyst at Merrill Lynch. "One hundred to 200 wouldn't be too bad as the majority of the synergy benefits would still be there. If they had to sell 600 or 700 it would not be good news."

Ladbroke has said it will reap £10m of savings from the acquisition in the first full year.

The MMC will release its report on 7 July and Mrs Beckett will make a ruling within 20 days.

Yesterday in the markets

STOCK MARKETS

Index	Close	Change	Change(%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	5888.40	56.10	0.96	6160.50	4382.80	3.93
FTSE 250	5920.40	22.80	0.39	6020.30	4384.20	3.01
FTSE 350	2877.20	24.20	0.85	2938.70	2141.80	3.75
FTSE All Share	2813.58	22.50	0.81	2861.12	2105.59	3.70
FTSE SmallCap	2769.10	4.10	0.27	2793.80	2182.10	2.95
FTSE Realind	1505.90	4.10	0.27	1511.00	1225.20	2.95
FTSE AIM	1137.80	2.70	0.24	1138.50	965.50	1.05
FTSE EURO 100	1047.85	9.71	0.93	1071.32	897.12	1.50
Dow Jones	8502.68	207.45	2.45	8600.00	7500.00	0.99
Nikkei	15347.00	221.05	1.45	15800.00	13000.00	4.68
Hang Seng	8813.78	30.98	0.35	8864.84	7487.24	2.82

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling	UK 10 year gilt	US long bond
3 months 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr	3 months 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr	3 months 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr
UK 7.50 0.81 7.49 0.43	UK 5.89 0.13 5.84 0.38	US 5.98 1.04 5.81 1.06
US 8.95 0.05 8.58 0.38	Japan 3.50 0.40 3.86 0.51	Germany 4.45 1.31 1.95 1.38
Germany 3.50 0.40 3.86 0.51		4.87 0.98 9.43 1.21

CURRENCIES

\$/£	DM/£	¥/£
at 5 p.m.	at 5 p.m.	at 5 p.m.
Dollar 1.6385 +0.07c 1.6350	Starling 0.6103 -0.03p 0.6115	D-Mark 2.9063 -0.92p 2.9277
D-Mark 2.9063 -0.92p 2.9277	D-Mark 1.7723 -0.70p 1.7319	Yen 138.34 -4.00 116.36
Yen 138.34 -4.00 116.36	E index 104.00 0.00 100.00	\$ index 111.80 +0.02 102.90

TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)	2.5620	Malta (lira)	0.6176
Austria (schillings)	18.78	Mexican (nuevo peso)	13.07
Belgium (francs)	58.08	Netherlands (guilders)	3.1681
Canada (\$)	2.3076	New Zealand (\$)	2.9694
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8238	Norway (krone)	11.91
Denmark (krone)	10.78	Portugal (escudos)	284.65
Finland (markka)	8.8033	Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.9481
France (francs)	9.4208	Singapore (\$)	2.8034
Germany (marks)	2.8234	Spain (pesetas)	238.48
Greece (drachmas)	477.56	South Africa (rand)	7.9980
Hong Kong (\$)	12.26	Sweden (krone)	12.40
Ireland (pounds)	1.1129	Switzerland (francs)	2.3492
Indian (rupees)	62.67	Thailand (bahts)	60.96
Israel (shekels)	5.5081	Turkey (liras)	405291
Italy (lira)	2785	USA (\$)	1.5940
Japan (yen)	220.99		
Malaysia (ringgits)	6.0792		

Rates for indication purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook

www.bloomberg.com/uk

source: Bloomberg

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY PETER THAL LARSEN

NFC is over the worst

IT'S THREE years since Gerry Murphy took the wheel at NFC, and he has taken shareholders in the transport and distribution group on a pretty hairy ride. Despite the upbeat response to yesterday's results and massive share buy-back, the shares - which rose 3p to 181p - are just about back where they were when Mr Murphy took over. At the same time, the market has risen sharply.

Still, it looks as if NFC is over the worst. It has sold off all its peripheral businesses in order to concentrate purely on distribution and moving services. The cost-cutting that still needs to be done in the UK and continental Europe has been fully provided for, and should be more or less over this year.

Mr Murphy's priority now is on expanding the business in continental Europe and the Americas. Since the cash distribution will take gearing to about 80 per cent by September, there is not too much scope for deals. The company claims that it would be happy to ask shareholders for the money back if the right deal came along, but admits nothing is imminent. So any growth is likely to come from winning new contracts, and further improving efficiency.

In that respect, NFC has a lot to do. Operating margins in the Americas are just 3 per cent while the European business, despite a drastic improvement, is still loss-making and is only scheduled to break even next year. NFC needs more scale so it can spread its overheads, and building that up will take time.

Meanwhile the UK, where profits were up just 4 per cent on flat sales, is unlikely to provide much excitement. Unnervingly, NFC also made cautious noises about tough competition in distribution and weakness in the house moving market.

Analysts are looking for full-year profit figures, before exceptional ones, of about £125m. That puts NFC shares on a forward earnings multiple of 16. Mr Murphy is to be congratulated on what he has achieved. But those hoping that the shares will make up the ground they have lost in recent years will be disappointed. Hold.

Morland has a lot to swallow

MORLAND, the Oxfordshire brewer, has been suffering from a prolonged bout of indigestion. In the past year, it

has swallowed both the Exchange Diners chain of eateries and Ruddies, the Rutland brewer beloved by real-ale enthusiasts. The result is that the shares have never regained the 500p level at which the £22.2m rights issue was pitched early last year.

Turnover rose by 50 per cent for the six months to 31 March and operating profits, before exceptional items, were up 19 per cent to £7.8m. But Exchange has required substantial expenditure on refurbishments, reorganisation costs at Ruddies came to £1.32m, while a brewing contract worth £1.2m in the first half year has not been renewed.

The Rutland brewery will also close this autumn with additional costs of £900,000.

Sales of Old Speckled Hen, the group's well-known bitter, grew by 19 per cent in a declining national market. Not including Ruddies, beer sales rose by 11 per cent while brewery profits climbed to £2.6m. The tenanted estate also bucked the national trend.

Debt and interest charges are well up on a year ago and the tax charge has risen. Morland needs to spend a further £1.5m on fermentation capacity at Abingdon in the next few months, although the transfer of Ruddies production will raise capacity utilisation there from 60 per cent to around 90 per cent and produce cost savings of around £800,000 a year.

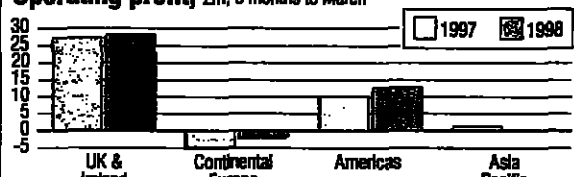
The second half has got off to a slow start with widespread flooding in Morland's Thames Valley heartland. For the full year analysts are edging forecasts up to £18.2m. The shares closed unchanged at 407.5p yesterday. At just under 10 times forecast earnings, they look high enough for now.

NFC: At a glance

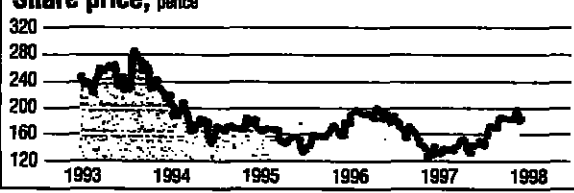
Market value: £1.26bn, share price 181.5p (+3.5p)

Trading record	95	96	97	97	98
Turnover (£bn)	2.20	2.46	2.41	1.07	1.09
Pre-tax profits (£m)	38.5	105.2	87.8	53.3	59.4
Earnings per share (p)	2.0	8.9	5.7	4.6	4.9
Dividends per share (p)	7.10	7.10	7.10	2.6	2.0

Operating profit, £m, 6 months to March



Share price, pence



Shanks thrives on rubbish

IT MAY be a cliché, but Shanks & McEwan is proving that it can make a handy amount of brass out of handling muck. In the past year, the grubby business of running landfill sites and burning BSE-ridden cows helped push up underlying profits for the year to March by 13 per cent to £25.4m.

There are two factors behind Shanks' success. First, the demand for landfill sites, combined with increasing restrictions on the creation of new ones, means that space is at a premium. Shanks has 125 million cubic metres of free space, two thirds of which already has planning permission.

Second, Shanks' Rechem incineration business is running at full tilt after winning a three-year contract to burn bonemeal made from slaughtered BSE cattle. Profits at the unit almost doubled to £1.75m, and are set to rise further as Shanks pushes through efficiency improvements. The government's enthusiasm for incineration as a cleaner way of disposing of waste, combined with a reluctance to allow new incinerators to be built, means that demand should be healthy even once the contract ends.

Looking ahead, using the methane gas thrown off by landfill sites to generate electricity is a growing business - it generated "tens of millions" of pounds of revenues last year.

All this adds up to encouraging growth prospects, and upgraded profit forecasts mean the shares - up 12.5p to 197.5p yesterday - now trade on a forward multiple of about 19. Even though they've doubled in the past year, the shares are still good value.

Poirot takes a stab at merchandising



John Conlan, Chorion chairman, left, with "Hercule Poirot", board the Orient Express at Victoria station in London

By David Lister
Arts News Editor

PORCELAIN models of Hercule Poirot, Miss Marple detective games and jigsaws with scenes from *Murder On The Orient Express* will soon be on the market following the sale yesterday of a controlling stake in Agatha Christie to the entertainment and leisure group Chorion.

Virtually no merchandising of the

Queen of Crime has ever taken place. But that will now change dramatically, David Lane, director of Chorion, said last night.

His company acquired a 64 per cent share in Agatha Christie from Booker for £10m. The remaining 36 per cent will continue to be owned by members of the Agatha Christie family and family trusts.

Matthew Prichard, the writer's grandson, will remain chairman of the company, which owns the

copyright of virtually all of Christie's works.

Chorion already has ownership rights to the works and merchandise exploitation of Enid Blyton, and in the last year earned £750,000 from such items as clothes and children's lunchboxes, and even Noddy chopsticks in Japan. The company also owns a number of nightclubs and operates the Pepsi Imax cinema in the Trocadero entertainment complex in the capital.

Chorion, formerly known as Trocadero, transformed itself as a leisure and entertainment group last September when it sold the Trocadero complex to Barford Holdings.

Mr Lane said: "With Agatha Christie something needs to be done in terms of brand awareness. I envisage jigsaws with scenes from the feature films, detective games, activity books for children with treasure hunts and mystery solving."

Akzo agrees to sell Courtaulds units

AKZO NOBEL yesterday defended its bid to become the world's biggest paintmaker by agreeing to sell two US units of Courtaulds to its rival PPG Industries after it acquires the UK chemical company.

PPG, based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, will pay Akzo \$285m (£174m) for the businesses it most wanted - Courtaulds' US production of paints for buildings and beverage cans. PPG, which said last month it might bid for all of Courtaulds, now will bid only if Akzo's offer fails.

The agreement clears the way for Akzo's \$3.68bn takeover of Courtaulds, the world's biggest marine and aerospace coatings maker, in a move that would catapult the Arnhem-based chemical maker

to world leadership in paints manufacturing. Akzo made its agreed cash and assumed-debt offer on 20 April.

"It's great news for Akzo in that it lifts its critical mass further in coatings, making them number one in their chosen areas," said Philip Morris, analyst with Nikko Europe.

Akzo has said it plans to bundle another major Courtaulds division, fibres, into its own and sell or spin it off the combination by 2000. A successful Akzo bid for Courtaulds "lifts their critical mass in fibres so they can have a fairly clear exit from the business," Mr Morris said.

Akzo shares rose as much as 14.5 pence, or 3 per cent, to 444 pence. Courtaulds shares, which have traded above Akzo's

450p-a-share offer for several weeks based on the likelihood that PPG may make a counter-bid, fell 21.5p to 444p, with 47 million shares traded by mid-afternoon in London.

Together, Akzo Nobel and Courtaulds would have coatings and annual paints sales of about \$5.67bn, combining Courtaulds' brands such as Micron Optima yacht paint and Interspray 900 gloss coatings with Akzo Nobel's decorative paint brands such as Astral and Crown.

Analysts estimate a deal would give Akzo control of nearly 15 per cent of the \$40bn worldwide paint and coatings market.

Under the April agreement, Akzo Nobel will pay £1.83bn in cash for Courtaulds and assume £430m of debt.

IN BRIEF

Recruitment group plans £40m move to market

HW GROUP, the recruitment company best known for its financial arm Harrison Willis, plans to seek a listing on the London Stock Exchange at the end of this month in a move that is expected to give it a market value of about £40m. The company, which is one of the stars of the latest *Independent 100* listing of fastest-growing private companies compiled by the *Independent* on Sunday and accounts Price Waterhouse, dates back to the 1950s, but it has grown especially rapidly since a management buyout in 1997, making profits of £3.9m on fee income of £40.3m in the year to 31 March 1998.

Heal's moves ahead

HEALS the upmarket home furnishing chain which came to the stock market in March last year, reported a 13 per cent increase in sales and a 28 per cent leap in profits to £2.15m in the 28 weeks to 28 March, helped by the buoyant housing market in London and South-east England. But chairman Martin Boase warned that sales growth in the second half would dip into single figures after the exceptional growth in the second half of last year. The group hopes to announce sites for two new stores later this year. The shares rose 1.5p to 178p, still only 3p above the flotation price.

Merrill pays \$400m settlement

MERRILL LYNCH has paid \$400m (£240m) to settle a civil suit brought by Orange County, California, which went bankrupt in 1994 after losing \$1.6bn on complex securities bought from a number of banks, including Merrill Lynch. Orange County alleged that the bank had "wantonly and callously" sold risky investments. In a statement, Merrill Lynch said: "We are confident we acted properly and professionally in our relationship with Orange County."

Life and pensions booming

THE LIFE and pensions industry saw a 33 per cent jump in sales in the first quarter of 1998. Premiums into life, pensions and collective investments leapt to £1.638bn on an annual basis, compared to £1.226bn in the same quarter last year. Sales of unit trusts were unprecedented, jumping by 40 per cent to £1.8bn. Of this, £1.4bn went into PEPs in the run-up to the Budget.

SkyePharma to raise \$50m

SKYEPHARMA, the biotech company that has deals with pharmaceutical giants SmithKline Beecham and Eli Lilly, yesterday announced plans to raise \$50m through an international offering of 36 million new shares, and to list its shares on New York's Nasdaq market. It said the proceeds would provide insurance against any unforeseen delays in commercialising its products. SkyePharma reported a pre-tax loss of £0.4m for the four months to 30 April, compared with a loss of £0.2m a year earlier.

Cortecs launches new company

CORTECS has launched OraTol, a new and independently funded biopharmaceutical company, which will develop novel products for the prevention and treatment of allergies and auto-immune diseases through the process of "tolerisation". Cortecs said three years of financing of £4.996m has been arranged for the new company via a subscription for shares in OraTol in Japan and Europe. Cortecs will retain 75.02 per cent of OraTol, and the remainder will be held by other investors. The subscription values OraTol at £20m. OraTol has targeted a number of diseases which represent major worldwide healthcare problems.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
British (P)	37.60m (36.97m)	8.48m (6.15m)	14.70p (13.54p) 5.0p (4.5p)	
British United Press (P)	73.10m (62.49m)	14.500m (8.379m) -0.70p (20.77p) 17.0p (15.25p)		
Bentley Holdings (P)	16.14m (15.10m)	0.716m (0.280m)	2.2p (1.0p)	0.5p (0.5p)
Essex of Leeds (P)	-	13.868m (12.807m) 8.01p (6.03p)	3.75p (3.39p)	
Heale (P)	14.89m (13.21m)	2.150m (0.878m)	12.0p (3.4p)	2.0p (n)
Leathers (P)	278.98m (302m)	4.25m (4.01m)	7.3p (6.2p)	2.0p (2.5p)
Morland (P)	85.73m (43.85m)	6.57m (6.53m)	4.4p (4.3p)	2.0p (2.5p)
NFC (P)	1.11bn (1.17bn)	59.4m (53.3m)	4.6p (7.7p)	4.2p (2.5p)
Premier Asset Mgt (P)	1.55m (-)	-0.250m (-)	-0.75p (-)	-
Shanks & McEwan (P)	177.0m (144.0m)	25.0m (22.4m)	8.9p (7.7p)	4.2p (3.5p)
Victoria (P)	35.73m (36.78m)	1.005m (2.29m)	10.71p (31.02p) 12.5p (-)	

(P) - Final (N) - Interim EPS is pre-exceptionals Dividend to be paid as a FD

Investors flock to software flotation

By Peter Thal Larsen

JSB, the company which makes software to prevent "cyber-skiving" - workers surfing the Internet for fun when they are supposed to be working - will today announce that its stock market flotation was six times oversubscribed.

Institutional demand for the shares was such that the firm not only reached its target of raising £3.6m in new money, but also allowed institutional shareholders, including the Cheshire Council pension fund and Murray Johnstone, to sell shares worth £4.2m.

The flotation values the company, which is joining the AIM junior market, at £18.9m. Its shares, which have been priced at 200p, are due to start trading on June 15.

The new funds will allow JSB to launch a marketing campaign for its SurfControl Internet product in the US and the UK. The package allows companies to control employees' access to the Internet by authorising or blocking certain sites.

The company also sells products which take applications based on the Unix server language and make them look like user-friendly Windows applications. In the 10 months to March, it made a £10,000 profit on sales of £2.6m.

Low-cost pensions 'carry misbuying risk'

By Andrew Verity

THE DEPUTY chairwoman of the personal finance regulator has warned the Treasury may be blamed for a fresh "misbuying scandal" because of plans to approve investments suitable for low-paid savers.

Helena Wiesner, deputy chairwoman of the Personal Investment Authority, urged the Government to reconsider its plans or face the likelihood that many customers would end up with the wrong savings vehicle.

She said the plans would deprive consumers of valuable advice, putting them in danger

of saving their money in a government-approved vehicle that was wrong for their needs.

Ms Wiesner said: "When the products in question have government backing I fear that wrong decisions could be made in many cases. I marvel at the courage of the Treasury to put itself firmly in the front line should we end up with a misbuying scandal."

Under the proposals, the Treasury will give approval to Individual Savings Accounts involving cash, insurance or unit trusts which track the FTSE 100 index. The accounts, to be introduced next April, must have low costs to get Treasury approval.

Ms Wiesner fears the low charges will leave no room for advice needed to protect their savings. "It is a major gap in the Government's initiative," she said. "People could be seduced through the Government backing to put their £1,000 into, for example, life insurance. If, as they have, people stop their premiums and don't get very much back, there will be a lot of very upset people."

"People will be left with a raw deal and they will have no-one to blame but the Treasury," Ms Wiesner stressed she was speaking in a personal capacity and not as a representative of the PIA.

Celsis board rejects cash bid

CELSIS International, the laboratory equipment group, yesterday rejected a bid by its former chief executive for one of its subsidiaries, as it revealed that it had received a number of approaches which could lead to a takeover of the whole company.

It is understood that the Celsis board turned down a cash bid for Celsis Laboratory Group, its US division, from Arthur Holden, who resigned as chief executive last month, because the price offered was too low.

ratories in St Louis, Missouri, and New Jersey, accounted for around a quarter of Celsis's £16.2m turnover last year.

At the time of his resignation, Mr Holden, who now lives in Chicago, had said that he was looking at making a bid for the whole company or taking it private.

However, yesterday's setback appeared to signal the end of Mr Holden's ambitions to own Celsis, as the company said that he did not intend to make an offer for the whole group and all discussions with him had terminated.

In a separate development, Celsis said that a "number of other parties had expressed an interest" in opening talks over a possible takeover.

The finance director, Mark Harris, said that it had been approached by about four other companies.

Mr Harris declined to name the potential bidders but said that they were "leading companies in the field" and were all "substantially bigger than Celsis".

Celsis said it was "reviewing" the approaches but added that it is "not seeking a purchaser".

Ban clawback by employers, MPs demand

By Andrew Verity

THE Government is being urged by MPs to consider outlawing a little-known practice used by employers to reduce employees' pensions by up to £63 a week.

The practice, known as "pensions clawback", uses archaic rules dating back to 1948 to justify reducing pension benefits by anything up to the full value of the Basic State Pension. Barclays Bank, BP and Marks & Spencer are just three of the FTSE 100 companies who use it.

Kerry Pollard, Labour MP for St Albans tabled an Early Day Motion yesterday urging the Government to end the practice as part of its full review of pension policy.

More than 90 MPs have lent support to the campaign. William Hague, the Tory party leader, has also expressed an interest. If the campaign were successful, more than 40 per cent of FTSE 100 companies would be forced to step up their contributions to pension schemes.

Under the practice, more than 2.5 million pensioners throughout the UK see their pension benefits reduced by up to £3,300 a year.

Employers use rules introduced in 1948 - originally designed to make the state pension affordable - to claw

back the value of part of a pensioner's basic state pension. The practice is justified on the grounds that employers have contributed to the basic state pension through National Insurance.

While the practice is legal, pension fund consultants and unions believe it runs directly against the government's policy of having two separate tiers of pension provision, the basic state pension and a secondary pension on top of that.

Barclays Bank, which has a pension fund surplus estimated at more than £2bn, recently faced angry protests from 50 pensioners at its AGM. They complained that they were losing up to £1,682 a year each because of pensions clawback.

Over the past three years, companies such as Friends Provident, Scottish Widows and NatWest have ditched pensions clawback. However, Cadbury-Schweppes, Heinz, IBM, Kodak and Nestlé still persist with it.

ملكا من الاصل

CMG surges ahead as the hi-tech romp continues

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

COMPUTER services group CMG charged to a new high as Morgan Stanley alighted on the shares.

The price surged 165p to 1,905p on the American investment house suggesting it will go to 2,500p.

IT shares have enjoyed a remarkable romp since FTSE International, which controls the City indices, decided to introduce a computer sector at the start of the year.

Shares of CMG, one of the more recent hi-tech companies, have joined in the fun, nearly doubling. They are now on a spectacular rating. Stockbroker Granville expects profits of £47.5m. Last year the group hit £38.6m.

The rest of the stock market put on a resilient display with Footsie improving 56.1 points to 5,898.4. The supporting indices also made headway.

A firm New York opening and expectations that the Monetary Policy Committee

will peg interest rates be behind the most robust hi-tech performance for more than three weeks.

Royal & Sun Alliance suffered the expected correction, off 45p to 655p, as Tuesday's rogue order driven trade was rubbed out.

Among the best performing leaders were BAT Industries, up 28.5p to 581.5p on Swiss buying, often a sign that corporate activity is in the wind, and Railtrack, back on the main line with a 41p gain (after 95p) on its results and its involvement in the high speed rail link between London and the Channel Tunnel.

Courtside, the chemical group, fell 21.5p to 444p as the American PPG Industries decided not to bid, leaving the way clear for Akzo Nobel, the Dutch group which has made a 450p cash offer.

MFI Furniture, the struggling retailer, was back in the takeover frame with Ikea, the Swedish group, punted as a

possible predator. The shares rose 5.5p to 87.5p in brisk trading. Before trading prospects deteriorated the shares were riding at 160p.

Storehouse, ahead of an investment dinner at London's Savoy Hotel, hosted by Henderson Crosthwaite, shaded 1.5p to 274.5p.

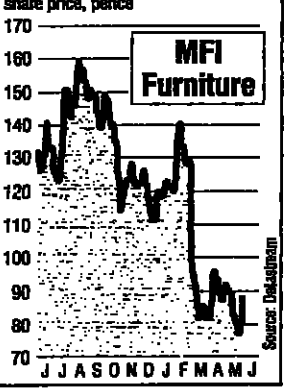
Queens Moat Houses, the hotel chain which once teetered on the brink of collapse, softened 0.5p to 35.5p as Salomon Smith Barney, the US securities group, emerged as a 14.63 per cent shareholder. SSB, which presumably picked up most of the shares sold by Banque Nationale de Paris Suisse on behalf of mystery Swiss investors, already held just under 3 per cent.

Asda was helped 7p higher to 188.5p on Dresdner Kleinwort Benson support, and Vodafone jumped 26.5p to 739.5p as analysts upgraded following Tuesday's results. An analysts' visit left

builders merchant Graham & Sons a shade firmer at 187.5p and JJB Sports enjoyed a tip sheet's attention, gaining 3p (after 55.5p) to 590p.

Game, the computer games retailer, was another to fail to hang on to its best level. Placed at 200p, the shares hit 255p before settling at 230p.

Booker, selling its controlling stake in Agatha Christie,



to Chorion, rose 21p to 269.5p. Chorion, the old Trocadero, hardened 2p to 25.25p.

Drug shares were untroubled by indications of tougher government price controls; Glaxo Wellcome rose 47p to 1,683p. Reports that generators may be forced to sell some plants clipped National Power but PowerGen gained 10.5p to 789.5p. Builders were helped by positive comments from DKB and Merrill Lynch.

Trading warnings made predictable impacts. Future Integrated Telephony fell 15.5p to 36p after forecasting a "substantial" loss. Kevin Clarke quit as managing director.

Then Fennell lost 7p to 57.5p. The luxury goods group said year's figures would be hit by overseas expansion.

Tandem, the cycle maker, hardened 0.25p to 8.75p as a shareholders' revolt emerged. Investors with 16.2 per cent want to replace three directors with members of their consortium. The idea, it appears,

is to pump a racecourse business run by consortium member John Sanderson into Tandem. Mr Sanderson's company manages the Caterick, Doncaster and Redcar courses. Loss-making Tandem's peak was 20.5p, hit two years ago.

Galen, the health group which came to market in July, fell 30p to 415p. The shares have been weak lately. Finance director Geoffrey Elliott said he doubted if there had been a leak of the profit announcement due later this month. Any leak "wouldn't provoke a sale", he said.

The fall, he said, was caused by selling by small shareholders. "There is no institutional selling," he maintained. The shares were placed at 150p; they peaked at 527.5p.

Packaging group MY Holdings firmed to 82.5p as stockbroker Albert E Sharp said it expects a modest profit advance to £14.55m this year.

TAKING STOCK

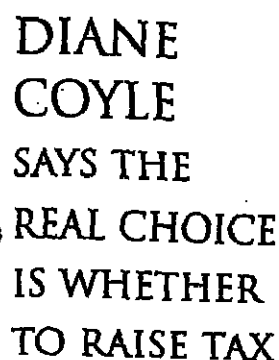
MINMET fell from its 10.5p peak to 9.5p despite an "encouraging" report from its gold-seeking 78.7 per cent owned offshoot, Credition Minerals, on prospects at its Devon exploration. Results of work in the Credition Trough area showed "further evidence of elevated gold values over a wide area". The site, it was said, had close similarities to Czech deposits where gold had been mined for hundreds of years. CM, traded on the fringe Off market, fell 3p to 33.5p after an early jump.

BTG, the old British Technology Group, hardened 11p to 702.5p ahead of figures today. There are hopes of positive developments at its Torotrak gearbox subsidiary. One possibility is a licensing deal with a major car maker. Talk is also in the air that BTG may disclose when it plans to demerge Torotrak, a move which could highlight the group's other operations.

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	PER Code
Alcoholic Beverages							
401 401	100.00	95.00	401 401	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
402 402	100.00	95.00	402 402	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
403 403	100.00	95.00	403 403	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
404 404	100.00	95.00	404 404	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
405 405	100.00	95.00	405 405	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
406 406	100.00	95.00	406 406	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
407 407	100.00	95.00	407 407	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
408 408	100.00	95.00	408 408	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
409 409	100.00	95.00	409 409	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
410 410	100.00	95.00	410 410	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
411 411	100.00	95.00	411 411	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
412 412	100.00	95.00	412 412	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
413 413	100.00	95.00	413 413	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
414 414	100.00	95.00	414 414	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
415 415	100.00	95.00	415 415	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
416 416	100.00	95.00	416 416	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
417 417	100.00	95.00	417 417	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
418 418	100.00	95.00	418 418	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
419 419	100.00	95.00	419 419	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
420 420	100.00	95.00	420 420	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
421 421	100.00	95.00	421 421	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
422 422	100.00	95.00	422 422	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
423 423	100.00	95.00	423 423	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
424 424	100.00	95.00	424 424	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
425 425	100.00	95.00	425 425	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
426 426	100.00	95.00	426 426	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
427 427	100.00	95.00	427 427	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
428 428	100.00	95.00	428 428	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
429 429	100.00	95.00	429 429	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
430 430	100.00	95.00	430 430	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
431 431	100.00	95.00	431 431	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
432 432	100.00	95.00	432 432	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
433 433	100.00	95.00	433 433	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
434 434	100.00	95.00	434 434	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
435 435	100.00	95.00	435 435	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
436 436	100.00	95.00	436 436	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
437 437	100.00	95.00	437 437	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
438 438	100.00	95.00	438 438	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
439 439	100.00	95.00	439 439	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
440 440	100.00	95.00	440 440	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
441 441	100.00	95.00	441 441	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
442 442	100.00	95.00	442 442	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
443 443	100.00	95.00	443 443	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
444 444	100.00	95.00	444 444	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
445 445	100.00	95.00	445 445	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
446 446	100.00	95.00	446 446	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
447 447	100.00	95.00	447 447	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
448 448	100.00	95.00	448 448	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
449 449	100.00	95.00	449 449	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
450 450	100.00	95.00	450 450	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
451 451	100.00	95.00	451 451	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
452 452	100.00	95.00	452 452	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
453 453	100.00	95.00	453 453	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
454 454	100.00	95.00	454 454	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
455 455	100.00	95.00	455 455	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
456 456	100.00	95.00	456 456	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
457 457	100.00	95.00	457 457	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
458 458	100.00	95.00	458 458	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
459 459	100.00	95.00	459 459	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
460 460	100.00	95.00	460 460	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
461 461	100.00	95.00	461 461	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
462 462	100.00	95.00	462 462	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
463 463	100.00	95.00	463 463	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
464 464	100.00	95.00	464 464	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
465 465	100.00	95.00	465 465	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
466 466	100.00	95.00	466 466	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
467 467	100.00	95.00	467 467	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
468 468	100.00	95.00	468 468	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
469 469	100.00	95.00	469 469	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
470 470	100.00	95.00	470 470	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
471 471	100.00	95.00	471 471	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
472 472	100.00	95.00	472 472	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
473 473	100.00	95.00	473 473	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
474 474	100.00	95.00	474 474	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
475 475	100.00	95.00	475 475	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
476 476	100.00	95.00	476 476	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
477 477	100.00	95.00	477 477	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
478 478	100.00	95.00	478 478	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
479 479	100.00	95.00	479 479	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
480 480	100.00	95.00	480 480	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
481 481	100.00	95.00	481 481	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
482 482	100.00	95.00	482 482	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
483 483	100.00	95.00	483 483	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
484 484	100.00	95.00	484 484	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
485 485	100.00	95.00	485 485	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
486 486	100.00	95.00	486 486	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
487 487	100.00	95.00	487 487	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
488 488	100.00	95.00	488 488	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
489 489	100.00	95.00	489 489	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
490 490	100.00	95.00	490 490	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
491 491	100.00	95.00	491 491	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
492 492	100.00	95.00	492 492	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
493 493	100.00	95.00	493 493	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
494 494	100.00	95.00	494 494	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
495 495	100.00	95.00	495 495	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
496 496	100.00	95.00	496 496	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
497 497	100.00	95.00	497 497	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
498 498	100.00	95.00	498 498	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
499 499	100.00	95.00	499 499	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00
500 500	100.00	95.00	500 500	100.00	-0.50	-1.50	100.00

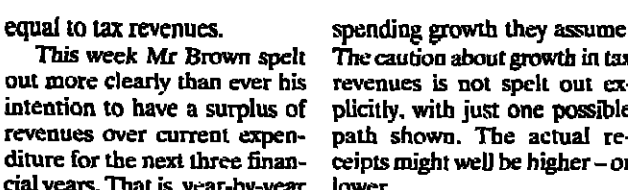
52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	PER Code
Food Retailer							
1 1	100.00	2.50	31 242	770	0.00	100.00	100.00
2 2	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
3 3	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
4 4	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
5 5	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
6 6	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
7 7	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
8 8	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
9 9	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
10 10	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
11 11	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
12 12	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
13 13	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
14 14	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
15 15	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
16 16	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
17 17	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
18 18	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
19 19	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
20 20	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
21 21	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
22 22	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
23 23	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
24 24	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
25 25	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
26 26	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
27 27	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
28 28	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
29 29	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
30 30	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
31 31	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
32 32	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
33 33	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
34 34	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
35 35	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
36 36	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
37 37	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
38 38	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
39 39	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
40 40	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
41 41	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
42 42	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
43 43	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
44 44	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
45 45	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
46 46	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
47 47	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
48 48	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
49 49	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
50 50	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
51 51	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
52 52	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
Food Processor							
1 1	100.00	2.50	31 242	770	0.00	100.00	100.00
2 2	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
3 3	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
4 4	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
5 5	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
6 6	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
7 7	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
8 8	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
9 9	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
10 10	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
11 11	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
12 12	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
13 13	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
14 14	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
15 15	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
16 16	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
17 17	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
18 18	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
19 19	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
20 20	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
21 21	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
22 22	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
23 23	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
24 24	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
25 25	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
26 26	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
27 27	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
28 28	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
29 29	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
30 30	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
31 31	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
32 32	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
33 33	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
34 34	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
35 35	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
36 36	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
37 37	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
38 38	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
39 39	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
40 40	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
41 41	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
42 42	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
43 43	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
44 44	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
45 45	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
46 46	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
47 47	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
48 48	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
49 49	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
50 50	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
51 51	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
52 52	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
Food Distributor							
1 1	100.00	2.50	31 242	770	0.00	100.00	100.00
2 2	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
3 3	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
4 4	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
5 5	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
6 6	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
7 7	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
8 8	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
9 9	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
10 10	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
11 11	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
12 12	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
13 13	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
14 14	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
15 15	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
16 16	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
17 17	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
18 18	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
19 19	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
20 20	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
21 21	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
22 22	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
23 23	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
24 24	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
25 25	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
26 26	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
27 27	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
28 28	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
29 29	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
30 30	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
31 31	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
32 32	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
33 33	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
34 34	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
35 35	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
36 36	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
37 37	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
38 38	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
39 39	99.50	10.00	31 242	770	222.00	100.00	100.00
40 40	99.50	10.00					

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



The TUC has launched a simultaneous attack saying the state of the finances is prudent enough, and urging growth of public expenditure of 3 per cent a year in real terms. This would raise the share of gov-

Secondly, the notion that the Chancellor is building up a "war chest" rests on the prospect that, on the assumptions for spending set out in the Treasury's Red Book last Budget, revenues will increase by more than enough to satisfy the "golden rule". This rule is the basic law of prudent public finances which says the government should borrow no more than it invests, and current spending should be less than or



government surplus. All praise to Mr Brown for breaking with this dishonest tradition and transferring on the side of caution. When he has more money than predicted in the bank, then he will presumably spend it – and if that happens to be close to the next election, his fraternal criticisms will change their tune.

The Red Book sets out a range of forecasts for the future borrowing requirement which vary according to the real

implies an increase in spending in cash terms of about £12bn next year rising to nearly £40bn by 2001/2002. That doesn't look too Scrooge-like, although the critics still argue that it is not enough to meet the needs of a starved public sector.

They might be right, but they need to come clean about the implications of spending more. In a nutshell, these are:

- either to be as carefree as the Tories about controlling gov-

matter, have accused him of being too lax on consumers. But the Government has not yet made it plain to the electorate that if they want really big increases in their favourite types of expenditure they will have to vote one day for really big middle class tax increases. This is not an option we will find in next month's comprehensive spending review.

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Turnbull after after nine and a half years with the broker. Mr Hicks has also been Shadow Chancellor for Lord Sutch's party for the last decade.

"You can't retire from the Monster Raving Loony Party, though. Once you join, you're in for life," says Mr Hicks cheerfully.

The only difference between the party and people in the Square Mile is that "they dress differently - except on 'dress down' Fridays, when they look exactly the same," he adds.

Mr Hicks was director in charge of sales trading at SCST until 18 months ago, when

Stuart Mitchell took over the running of Morgan Grenfell's European Growth Unit Trust and the European Capital Growth Fund in August 1996 shortly after it was revealed that Mr Young had not been following investment guidelines to the letter. Now Mr Mitchell has joined JO Hambro Investment Management as a director. He will be heading the specialist European equity unit from the middle of July.

Argentina	16385	10000	Oman	05303	
Brazil	18987	12615	Pakistan	72267	44330
China	33566	82789	Philippines	63738	38100
Costa Rica	33717	32784	Roland	57493	35040
Egypt	55863	34008	Qatar	58650	36405
Ghana	38227	29300	Russia	10703	69650
Hungary	39202	21484	South Korea	22932	139100
India	89481	47795	Taiwan	56074	34395
Indonesia	190858	106500	Thailand	88244	49500
Kuwait	05076	03063	Turkey	42766	25700
Nigeria	14708	89750	UAE	60174	35725

	Overnight		1 week		1 month		3 months		6 months		1 year	
	Bid	Offer	Bid	Offer	Bid	Offer	Bid	Offer	Bid	Offer	Bid	Offer
Treasury Bill					726	730		730				
LIBOR												
Dominic Deppa	720	600	725	735	724	741	735	744	738	744	724	741
Erica D'Amico	721	721	724	740	723	735	728	744	740	745	740	744
Eligible Bank Bills							726	735		728	735	
Starring Oaks					726	735	744	741	734		740	742
Superior Oil					557	561						
ECU Deposits					433	425	413	425	433	425		

www.bloomberg.com/uk **Source: Bloomberg**

Commodity Indices		Goldman Sachs		at 3:30pm	
	Base date	Chrg	%Chg	31 Dec	%Chg
Index	1870=100	153.34	--	215.06	+17.0%
Agricultural	1870=100	188.63	--	231.26	+21.8%
Minerals	1885=100	540.8	--	85.86	-84.1%
And Metals	1877=100	140.82	--	158.79	+12.7%
Livestock	1870=100	17.76	--	51.03	+188.0%
Free Metals	1875=100	383.90	--	463.54	+20.7%


Oct/88		Nov/88		Dec/88		Jan/89		Feb/89		Mar/89	
Oct/88	246.80	Jul/88	811.00	Nov/88	76.00	Jul/88	238.50	Jan/89	28.28	Feb/89	28.28
Oct/88	246.80	Jul/88	825.00	Nov/88	78.50	Jul/88	243.25	Jan/89	28.28	Feb/89	28.28
Vol	0	Vol	0	Vol	0	Vol	0	Vol	0	Vol	0
Other Foods											
as 5/24/89											
Live Cattle	(CME) \$40K to	86.50	Jul	White Males	(SAC) 5/10 mil	54.00	54.00				
Aug Pork Bellies	(CME) \$40K to	52.30	Jul	Butter	(TCM) 7/30 mil	73.00	73.00				
Jul Orange Juice	(CTN) 3/55K to	16.50	Jul	Soybean Oil	(COT) 5/50K to	70.00	70.00				
Jul Corn	(CTN) 3/55K to	10.15	Jul	Cotton	(COT) 5/50K to	70.00	70.00				
Jul Cattle	(CST) 5/55K to	13.95	Jul	Coconut Palm	(CST) 5/50K to	70.00	70.00				
Nov Flour	(WCE) 5/20 m	32.00	Jun	Woolen Yarn	(TCM) 5/500K	255.00	255.00				

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455	456	457	458	459	460	461	462	463	464	465	466	467	468	469	470	471	472	473	474	475	476	477	478	479	480	481	482	483	484	485	486	487	488	489	490	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500	501	502	503	504	505	506	507	508	509	510	511	512	513	514	515	516	517	518	519	520	521	522	523	524	525	526	527	528	529	530	531	532	533	534	535	536	537	538	539	540	541	542	543	544	545	546	547	548	549	550	551	552	553	554	555	556	557	558	559	560	561	562	563	564	565	566	567	568	569	570	571	572	573	574	575	576	577	578	579	580	581	582	583	584	585	586	587	588	589	590	591	592	593	594	595	596	597	598	599	600	601	602	603	604	605	606	607	608	609	610	611	612	613	614	615	616	617	618	619	620	621	622	623	624	625	626	627	628	629	630	631	632	633	634	635	636	637	638	639	640	641	642	643	644	645	646	647	648	649	650	651	652	653	654	655	656	657	658	659	660	661	662	663	664	665	666	667	668	669	670	671	672	673	674	675	676	677	678	679	680	681	682	683	684	685	686	687	688	689	690	691	692	693	694	695	696	697	698	699	700	701	702	703	704	705	706	707	708	709	710	711	712	713	714	715	716	717	718	719	720	721	722	723	724	725	726	727	728	729	730	731	732	733	734	735	736	737	738	739	740	741	742	743	744	745	746	747	748	749	750	751	752	753	754	755	756	757	758	759	760	761	762	763	764	765	766	767	768	769	770	771	772	773	774	775	776	777	778	779	780	781	782	783	784	785	786	787	788	789	790	791	792	793	794	795	796	797	798	799	800	801	802	803	804	805	806	807	808	809	810	811	812	813	814	815	816	817	818	819	820	821	822	823	824	825	826	827	828	829	830	831	832	833	834	835	836	837	838	839	840	841	842	843	844	845	846	847	848	849	850	851	852	853	854	855	856	857	858	859	860	861	862	863	864	865	866	867	868	869	870	871	872	873	874	875	876	877	878	879	880	881	882	883	884	885	886	887	888	889	890	891	892	893	894	895	896	897	898	899	900	901	902	903	904	905	906	907	908	909	910	911	912	913	914	915	916	917	918	919	920	921	922	923	924	925	926	927	928	929	930	931	932	933	934	935	936	937	938	939	940	941	942	943	944	945	946	947	948	949	950	951	952	953	954	955	956	957	958	959	960	961	962	963	964	965	966	967	968	969	970	971	972	973	974	975	976	977	978	979	980	981	982	983	984	985	986	987	988	989	990	991	992	993	994	995	996	997	998	999	1000
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Worldwide Acc	9100	9100	0.67	FTSE 100	3970	10440	1.01
Lloyds Bank Unit Trust: Managers Ltd				FTSE 100 Acc	1949	10720	1.01
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Diprose looks to the 'old hands' to pull England through



Tony Diprose: Tough task
Photograph: Allsport

IF A natural leader always knows his own mind, Tony Diprose is bright enough to realise that a problem shared is a problem solved. The Saracens No 8 spent last season's domestic Premiership and cup campaigns picking the brains of a veritable Cabinet-full of hardened decision makers - Francois Pienaar, Michael Lynagh and Philippe Sella were the support staff from heaven - but he may well discover this weekend that captaincy can also be a very lonely ordeal.

Asked to call the shots in the absence of the injured Matt Dawson, who had been handed the reins only as a result of Lawrence Dallaglio's shoulder problems and the various aches and pains affecting Martin Johnson and Tim Rodber, Diprose spent a humid afternoon in Brisbane insisting that his England charges possessed sufficient vim and vigour to give John Eales' Wallabies a run for their Australia dollars in the first Test at the Suncorp Stadium on Saturday. "We wouldn't be here if we didn't consider ourselves capable of winning," he said in time-honoured fashion. "It's simply up to the experienced guys in the side to pull the new caps through."

And which experienced guys might they be? "I'll be looking to Richard Cockerill, Garath Archer, Graham Rowntree and Austin Healey, players who have felt the pressure of Test rugby and thrived on it. I know what it's like to be capped for the first time, as five of our side will be on this occasion; for the

first 20 minutes, you don't really know what the hell is happening. "Yes, I'm captain, but I can't spend the whole game worrying about the other 14 in the side. I have a performance of my own to worry about."

The only flaw in the Diprose philosophy is that Cockerill and company hardly fall into the "been there, done that, got the T-shirt" category. The withdrawal of Dawson with knee trouble and the consequent emergence of Scott Benton as England's fifth scrum-half in 13 outings leaves the tourists with just 72 caps between them. In stark contrast, four of Saturday's Wallabies - Eales, Tim Horan,

national side may well bear fruit over the coming months, is certainly intent on putting years on his charges. Based in Caloundra, about 80 miles north of Brisbane on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, the Wallabies must make their way to training by mountain bike rather than the more customary luxury bus.

"Some of these blokes have spent the last couple of years in five-star hotel accommodation and we thought it might be useful to get them out of the plastic lifestyle and back to some normality," explained the coach, who inflicted so many press-ups on his players yesterday that they barely had the strength to turn a pedal.

Clive Woodward, Macqueen's English counterpart, was rather more laid back, even though Dawson's sudden unavailability must have left him wondering if he would ever escape the jurisdiction of Sod's Law. "People talk about us being under pressure, but to my way of thinking we're under no pressure whatsoever," he said. "There is a huge amount of enthusiasm for this contest. I think we'll be very competitive indeed on Saturday and I'm convinced we'll do English rugby proud."

"I'm more than happy with Tony as captain - it was a tough call to choose Matt above him in the first place - and I'm perfectly confident that Scott will prove a high-class replacement

at scrum-half. We're pretty hopeful that Matt will be fit for the start of the New Zealand leg of the tour next week, but I'm not going to say now that he will be captain for the rest of the trip. That very much depends on what happens against the Wallabies.

"Believe me, we have a fresh young side just raring to go. I saw England's defeat in Sydney last year and, quite frankly, I think it was a mistake to select players who had just come off a hard Lions tour. We were asking the impossible, and had I been in charge, I wouldn't have picked them, full stop. There is no point playing people who cannot bring the right level of urgency and commitment to a job. You won't see any shortage of those qualities this time."

Gatland gaffe leaves Irish grounded

South Western Districts 27
Ireland 20

IRELAND yesterday became the first touring team to lose to the South African side South Western Districts, following an unfortunate decision by their coach Warren Gatland. The New Zealander took off the tight-head prop Peter Clohesy and the flanker Trevor Brennan with 10 minutes to go when Ireland were leading 20-14, after which they failed to score any more points, going down 27-20.

Gatland was honest enough to admit his mistake, saying: "It could have been something completely different if they'd stayed on the field and I have only myself to blame for that. But as it is a learning experience for the team, I will not make the same mistake again."

wrong options, keeping the ball close to the forwards, instead of running it wide. Nevertheless, they hit back to lead 20-14, thanks to three further Humphreys penalties as the Eagles forwards struggled to contain the Irish pack.

However, after Gatland replaced Clohesy and Brennan with John Hayes and David Corkery, everything started going wrong. The Ireland forwards were on the back foot and the Eagles took control, scoring 13 points without reply in the final 10 minutes.

South Western Districts: Tessa Roberts, C. Scott, Connerston, Berridge, 4. Drop goal Berridge, Ireland: T. Foley, Pennington, Humphreys, 5.

South Western Districts: Van Rensburg, Vorster, Corti, C. Scott, du Toit, Berridge (capt), Roberts, Wayne, Webb, Egan, T. Scott, Kopp, van Zyl, Frans, Hattings.

Ireland: Clarke, R. Wallace, Keane, Henderson, Maggs, Humphreys, O'Meara, Fitzpatrick, Jackson, Clohesy, O'Flynn, Fisher, Brennan, D. Wallace, Foley (capt).

Ireland outplayed the Eagles at the start. But they had to be satisfied with only a try from the No 8 Anthony Foley and trailed at the break 14-11 after their only other scores were two David Humphreys penalties.

Ireland frequently took the

● Cardiff have begun the search for a new head coach after Alex Evans, their Australian director of rugby, informed them that he would not be returning to Wales next season.

Scotland team, Digest, page 31

Pauls both old and new for England

Rugby League
By Dave Hadfield

TWO Pauls - Sterling and Deacon - from opposite ends of the age range are the most eye-catching selections in the 21-man England squad to face Wales next month. Although the side will carry the title Emerging England, his 33 years have not counted against Sterling, whose form for Leeds has marked him out as the best uncapped winger in the country this season.

"Age is no barrier if you are playing well enough," said the England and Great Britain coach, Andy Goodway, who has demonstrated an equally open-minded attitude towards young players by selecting the 19-year-old scrum-half Deacon, who has yet to start a Super League game for Bradford since arriving from Oldham this winter.

"Deacon and Paul Johnson of Wigan played consistently in the Academy last season and we

are looking for some form of production line to give us some continuity," Goodway said.

The side that will meet the Welsh at Widnes on 19 July will be captained from stand-off by Steve Blakeley, one of five players from Salford selected.

The Super League leaders, Leeds, also have five in the squad, including a first international call-up for Darren Fleary, who has been arguably the form prop in the competition so far. St Helens' Sean Long and the Sheffield pair of Steve Moly and Keith Senior are the only players in the squad with full Great Britain caps.

Their team-mate, Dale Laughton, is one obvious absentee among Super League's form players, because he has already opted to play for Scotland.

The Welsh coach, Clive Griffiths, will name his squad in two weeks' time and there is the prospect of several players who have returned to rugby union making themselves available.

Squad, Digest, page 31

Villeneuve brake on future

Motor racing

JACQUES VILLENEUVE is ready to keep Frank Williams and the rest of Formula One guessing over whether he will drive for his team next season.

Williams wants a decision earlier than usual - and before the British Grand Prix at Silverstone next month - amid continuing speculation over Villeneuve's future.

The 27-year-old has been linked to the British American Racing set-up led by his mentor and former manager Craig Pollock, which will make its official debut next year after buying out the Tyrrell team.

However, Villeneuve insisted yesterday as he began preparations for his home grand prix in Canada on Sunday that he cannot think about the 1999 campaign until he resolves the

problems that have frustrated him this season.

"It has not even crossed my mind where I will be driving next year," said the world champion, who has been linked with Ferrari by Michael Schumacher moves to McLaren.

"Everybody is concentrating so hard on getting this season going in the right direction there have not been any discussions on next year."

The Williams team do want a decision quickly, with the technical director, Patrick Head, saying: "We need to know soon whether Jacques is interested in driving for us or someone else next year."

Villeneuve, however, will want assurances that the car will be more competitive next season. He has scored just eight points in the opening six races, 22 fewer than at the same stage last season.



Chris Adams of Sussex edges a ball from Kent's Ben Phillips at Tunbridge Wells yesterday

Photograph: Peter Jay

No sleep for Sussex tailend

Cricket

By John Collis
at Tunbridge Wells

Sussex 189
Kent 0-0

FROM the depths of 56 for 5, Sussex had reason to thank a doubly pair of comparatively inexperienced tail-enders for gritting their way out of embarrassment yesterday, after Kent had chosen to bowl.

The wicketkeeper Shaun Humphries led the resistance in partnership

with the pace bowler James Kirtley.

The day was blustery enough to keep the threatening clouds away, the wicket was as well behaved as one would expect here, but the cricket was soporific. Humphries and Kirtley were not to blame; they had been left with a huge repair job after their top order had crumbled.

When Toby Peirce and Wasim Khan made a steady start against a Kent attack without Dean Headley, who is in the Test squad, and the rested Martin McCague, there was no sign

that batting was about to become such a difficult occupation. Indeed, the seam bowler Ben Phillips - later to return with a vengeance - gave way to Matthew Fleming for the eighth over of the match, hardly a sign the bowlers were in command.

They soon were, however. Khan snicked the bustling Fleming, and Peirce misjudged a four legside bounce. Chris Adams looked to take charge before a confident hook found Alan Igglesden on the boundary, while Michael Bevan thick-edged to one of two gullies.

Sussex's predicament deepened when Jamie Carpenter missed a Carl Hooper flipper, Alex Edwards was snared by Igglesden and Keith Newell fell to an acrobatic Steve Marsh catch. Towards the end of the second session, however, Humphries and Kirtley had proved such a nuisance that Fleming was bowling to four slips, a forward short leg and a leg slip, and in the evening their impertinence meant that the very occasional medium pace of Matthew Walker was tried by a now impatient Kent, bereft of better ideas.

Kirtley was dropped at slip when on four, and Humphries survived a couple of tough chances, but their stand shone out on a dour day, rewarding both with hard-earned career-best scores. Eventually, Kirtley snicked once too often, and Humphries was the undeserving victim of a horrid mix-up with Jason Lewry, but in the context of the day their 62-over stand had been an epic. Their downfall left Kent a token over to survive, Lewry bowling to three slips and two gullies before the close.

Dale remains determined

By David Llewellyn
at The Oval

Surrey 193-3
v Worcestershire

NO mad dogs, but quite a few Englishmen, trooped out in the middle sun as Surrey attempted to attract a larger clientele later in the day by starting the match at noon. It did not appear to work, even though admission was free after 5pm.

There would certainly have been worth watching as well, because that was around the time that Jason Ratcliffe, rather like one of those cacti that flower once in a while, really blossomed. And if he is no cactus the former Warwickshire opener is certainly a prickly prospect

Ratcliffe blooms with perfect hundred

By David Llewellyn
at The Oval

Surrey 193-3
v Worcestershire

While the top cats such as Alec Stewart, Graham Thorpe and Mark Butcher are away on England duty, the Surrey Volunteer Reserve force can and do play.

The later start did provide the batsmen with some dubious conditions later on - there was much murk around the 6.30 mark - but by then most of the spectators had gone, as had Ratcliffe, but not before he had reached his hundred, an excellent innings revealing powerful driving, exquisite timing and good judgement.

His perfectly paced effort was a great example for his partner at the other end, Ian Ward. It was only his seventh first class appearance for Surrey but he

helped Ratcliffe compile Surrey's fourth century opening stand of the season in just seven starts. For much of the day the weather held off and even when the gloom descended Ratcliffe was so well established they played beyond the first light, and well after the appearance of a second light. When rain drove them off five minutes after normal time to end proceedings 55 short of the scheduled finish, it interrupted a rather awkward spell for Surrey, who had by then lost three quick wickets.

First to go was Ward, 25, who is in his second spell at The Oval after being released in 1992 before returning in 1996. The left-batter's 64 was a career best and it revealed a great deal

of patience and shot selection.

He was leg before attempting to turn a Richard Illingworth delivery off his legs, after a stay of three and a half hours. Ratcliffe's demise soon followed. He was bowled playing across the line, three balls after bringing up his hundred with a straight drive for his 13th four. It was his second successive hundred against Worcestershire; he scored the other last year when making his first game for Surrey. This, the fifth of his career, contained two 6s and enough shots to suggest that with or without the big names Surrey will provide some serious resistance this season. That was not the case with Adam Holoake - he fell leg before pushing at Illingworth.

Merchandising is something most sports stars do, but few with the success of 35-year-old Jordan. His sports videos alone have sold over four million copies, bringing in \$80m. But his panache, athleticism and intelligence on the court have boosted the whole sport, especially since the Bulls won the first of five consecutive NBA championships in 1990-91. When they played the seventh game of their play-offs against the Indiana Pacers to get into this year's finals, over 20 million people watched because it might just have been Jordan's last game. He may be nearing the end of his playing career, though he has yet to decide on his future. He will not be hard up in his old age.

Jordan's earnings run into billions

By Andrew Marshall
in Washington

MICHAEL JORDAN, Chicago Bulls guard and NBA superstar, has had a transforming effect on the game. According to Fortune magazine, that effect is quantifiable: about \$10 billion (£6 billion).

That fantastic figure comes from adding up sales of sports gear and shoes by Nike and other companies, increased sales of NBA-licensed caps, shirts and jerseys, and generally increased attendances at games, television and advertising revenue. It puts Jordan in a class of his own, not only as an athlete but as a mini-economy. To give some idea of the comparison, that makes Jordan worth about as much to the US economy as the state of Vermont, and puts him on a par with the wealthy European mini-state of Luxembourg (population: 400,000, none of them remotely as good at basketball).

Jordan, who is paid \$33m by the Bulls and makes \$50m a year from other sources, is remarkably modest about the sea of cash he generates, the equivalent of £100 for every man, woman and child in Britain. "That's speculation. I think the first line says that it's an estimation and no one really knows and no one can verify those numbers," he said as he arrived in Salt Lake City for the first game of the NBA finals against the Utah Jazz. And he told Fortune: "Even now, when I see kids wearing my shoes, it's kind of wild. Sometimes I feel shocked. I just never knew there was that much business surrounding the way I play the game and the way I approach the game."

Cricket scoreboard

Britannia Assurance County Championship
First day of four, 11.0 unless stated
Hampshire v Glamorgan
Hampshire won toss
SOUTHAMPTON: Hampshire (4pts), with nine first-innings wickets standing, are 288 runs behind Glamorgan (2).
GLAMORGAN - First innings
S P James bow b James 34
A W Evans b McLean 29
A Dale c Ayres b Maccares 22
M P Maynard c Ayres 16
P A Corley b McLean 14
M J Powell c Smith b Hartley 12
G P Sutcliffe c Ayres b McLean 10
D L Shaw bow b James 10
S D Thomas c Ayres b Maccares 11
S L Welsh not out 12
Extras (b4, lb4, nb5) 12
Total (98 overs) 288
Fall: 1-28, 2-42, 3-43, 4-102, 5-201, 6-216, 7-230, 8-244, 9-245
Bowling: McLean 19-5-12-3; Hartley 19-5-11-4; Maccares 11-2-66-4; James 21-6-75-2; Udal 7-2-3-4
Worcestershire - first innings
G W White not out 0
D T Stephenson bow b Parker 0
Extras (b4, lb4, nb5) 0
Total (for 1, 1.2 overs) 0
To bat: R A Smith, M Keach, I A Ayres, A D Maccares, P R Whitson, S D Udal, R D James, N A Hogg, P J Hartley
Bowling: Udal 1-1-0-0; Parker 0-0-0-1
Umpires: T E Jesty and K E Palmer

Kent v Sussex
Kent won toss
TUNBRIDGE WELLS: Kent (4pts), with all first-innings wickets standing, are 189 runs behind Sussex (0).
SUSSEX - First innings
M T E Peirce c Marsh b Fleming 11
A J Khan c Marsh b Fleming 12
C J Archer c Igglesden b Phillips 12
M G Bowen c Ward b Phillips 10
J R Carpenter b Hooper 1
K M Marsh b Igglesden 18
A J Edwards bow b Igglesden 10
S B Humphries run out 10
J J Kirtley c Kay b Fleming 24
J D Lowery c Walker b Fleming 1
M A Robinson not out 0
Extras (b14, w10) 24
Total (108.5 overs) 189
Fall: 1-25, 2-43, 3-45, 4-56, 5-68, 6-78, 7-84, 8-88, 9-97
Bowling: Igglesden 24-9-35-2; Phillips 25-4-72-6; Fleming 23-14-34-4; Hooper 28-12-30-1; Peirce 5-3-0-0; Walker 2-0-0-0
KENT - First innings
D P Fulton not out 0
R W T Kirtley not out 0
Total (for 1, 1.0 overs) 0
To bat: T R Ward, C L Hooper, A P Wells, M J Walker, M V Fleming, T S A Marsh, M P Smith, A P Igglesden, B J Phillips
Bowling: Lewis 1-1-0-0
Umpires: B Lancaster and J W Holder

Essex v Nottinghamshire
Nottinghamshire won toss
ILFORD: Nottinghamshire (2pts) have scored 288 for 8 against Essex (0).
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE - First innings
M P Downman c Robinson b Scott 48
R T Robinson c S G Law b Scott 48
U Azzam c S G Law b Scott 12
P Johnson c Barry b Scott 12
G F Archer c S G Law b Cowan 43
N A Gle b Scott 12
P J Francis c Potts b Scott 12
G M W Reed not out 12
P A Stringer not out 2
Extras (b7, w10, nb2) 29
Total (for 1, 88 overs) 288
Fall: 1-5, 2-78, 3-108, 4-226, 5-258, 6-268, 7-276
To bat: M N Brown, A R Oram
Bowling: Scott 18-5-33-3; Cowan 27-4-65-1; D R Law 10-4-40-0; Iran 17-3-45-1; Scott 10-5-40-2; Grayson 6-3-6-0
ESSEX - First innings
J L Langer c Goldingwood b Betts 36
R A Giddey c Scott b Betts 36
G D Lloyd c Poley b Malcolm 8
M A Smith c Poley b Malcolm 8
P J Crawley c Warren b Rose 9
N H Fairbrother c Bailey b Taylor 7
A Finelli c Curran b Rose 46
W K Hogg c Malcolm b Rose 22
M Watson bow b Malcolm 0
D L Hogg c Malcolm b Rose 0
I D Austin not out 12
G Chapple c Lloyds b Rose 4
Extras (b2, w7, nb18) 27
Total (for 8, 38.4 overs) 132
Fall: 1-2, 2-24, 3-46, 4-48, 5-68, 6-125, 7-136, 8-146
To bat: R J Green
Bowling: Malcolm 9-1-27-2; Curran 16-4-65-3; Taylor 7-1-35-1; Rose 7-22-0; Pennington 1-0-1-0
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE M S Loe, R J Bailey, K

M Curran, A L Pennington, D Ripley, G P Swann, F A Rose, D E Malcolm, J P Taylor, Umpires: M J Harris and G Sharp.

Somerset v Warwickshire
Warwickshire won toss
TAUNTON: Somerset (2pts) have scored 283 for 5 against Warwickshire (0).
SOMERSET - First innings
P D Bowler bow b Brown 9
P C L Holloway b Giddins 2
M N Lathwell c Brown b Giddins 10
S C Eccleshall c Rose b Hogg 94
R J Turner not out 12
M E Trescowthick not out 7
N Ballouch not out 23
Extras (b4, lb4, nb8) 23
Total (for 8, 72 overs) 283
Fall: 1-3, 2-18, 3-38, 4-52, 5-242
To bat: G D Rose, M A Marsh, A R Caddick
Bowling: Giddins 19-3-57-2; Brown 15-5-54-2; Hogg 7-1-25-0; Smith 5-4-45-0; Giles 11-1-47-0; Hogg 2-0-5-1
WARWICKSHIRE M V Knight, M J Powell, D L Hogg, B C Lara, T L Perne, D R Brown, T K Papp, N M K Smith, A P Clegg, G Welch, S H Giddins
Umpires: R A White and P Willey

Surrey v Worcestershire
Surrey won toss
THE OVAL: Surrey (0pts) have scored 193 for 3 against Worcestershire (1). To-day: 12.0.

SURF - First innings
J D Ratcliffe b Illingworth 100
I J Ward bow b Illingworth 54
N Sheard not out 12
A D Brown not out 12
Extras (b1, lb4, nb8) 13
Total (for 2, 95.4 overs) 193
Fall: 1-54, 2-103, 3-182
To bat: B C Holoake, T J N Batty, I D K Salisbury, A J Tudor, M P Bicknell, Saqain Mustafiz
Bowling: Newport 12-4-6-22-0; Shearer 10-4-13-0; Moody 7-3-29-0; Lampitt 5-3-10-0; Solanki 7-1-24-0
WORCESTERSHIRE A Holoake, V S Solanki, G A Hick, G R Haynes, T M Lampitt, D A Lambard, R S J Rhodes, S R Shearer
Umpires: J W Lloyds and A G T Whitehead

No play yesterday
CHESTERFIELD: Derbyshire v Gloucestershire
HEADINGLEY: Yorkshire v Lancashire

Starting today
First Test
Five days, 11.0
EDGBASTON: England v South Africa
AGN TROPHY (one day): 11.00; Griff and Cotton CC: Warwickshire v Minor Counties

America
rudimental head
Hunt Cup betting

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America awaits Real Quiet champion

THE thousands of racegoers who will converge on Epsom in 48 hours' time will doubtless assume that the best three-year-old on the planet will also be taking the air on the Surrey Downs. In fact, though, the popular wisdom may be a long way out - 3,500 miles to be precise, which is the distance to Belmont Park in New York, where on Saturday night, Real Quiet could become only the 12th horse in American racing history to win the Triple Crown.

This news may come as a surprise not just to British punters, but also to a few in the States. American racing has struggled to compete with sports like basketball and baseball in recent years, and unlike the last three Triple Crown winners, Affirmed (1978), Seattle Slew (1977) and Secretariat (1973), the emergence of Real Quiet has not gripped the public imagination. Worse, there are those who claim that Real Quiet won a poor Kentucky Derby and an

Greg Wood on muted acclaim for the horse attempting the US Triple Crown

even weaker Preakness Stakes. They point out that it took him seven races to lose his maiden status, and that he won just two of his first dozen starts. In attempting to join the greats of the American tracks, the critics say, he is "messing with history".

This is of little concern, RICHARD EDMONDSON NAP: Rich Glow (Haydock 4.30) NB: Palais (Yarmouth 2.10)

though, to either Bob Baffert, the colt's trainer, or Mike Pegram, the exceptionally fortunate owner who managed to buy Real Quiet for just \$17,000 (£10,600). The bargain price may have had something to do with Real Quiet's legs, which were so crooked that they required corrective surgery sim-

ply to allow him to race. These days, they are as robust as Pegram's credit rating. Success in the 130th Belmont would not only take Real Quiet's earnings past \$2m (£1.25m), but also earn a \$5m (£3.1m) bonus for completing the Triple Crown.

Baffert at least can be in no doubt about the pressure which the possibility brings to bear. Twelve months ago, he arrived at Belmont with Silver Charm, but he failed by just three-quarters of a length to beat Touch Gold and become the 12th Triple Crown winner. Instead, he became the 13th horse to fail the final test.

Baffert says he has more confidence in Real Quiet than he did in Silver Charm, and it may be that the weather holds more worries than his rivals on Saturday, many of whom have already been well beaten in

one or both of the first two legs. Real Quiet ran poorly at Golden Gate Fields in January when the track had been reduced to slop by El Nino's storms, but his form ever since has been impossible to fault.

"It took Real Quiet a long time to learn about the starting gate," Baffert says. "He was just a big, awkward colt. The races were too short for him last year and after the wire he would catch them all. All the riders came back and said he needs more distance. As soon as I put the blinkers on him in the fall and ran him long, he was a different colt."

One horse who could cause problems is the D Wayne Lukas-trained Grand Slam, who has never been beaten at Belmont. Lukas, though, takes an approach which will be familiar to followers of Aidan O'Brien, and has yet to decide whether the colt will even line up for the race.

For Baffert, who is allergic to straw, the only certainty is that



Real Quiet starts his Triple Crown sequence in the Kentucky Derby Photograph: Reuters

he will be in tears this weekend, since he will accompany Real Quiet in person on his flight to New York (Silver Charm last year was the only horse to receive

the same honour). The pundits, though, believe that Real Quiet is still maturing and could improve again, just as he did between the Kentucky Derby, in

which he beat Victory Gallop by half a length, and the Preakness, when he beat the same horse by two and a quarter.

If so, immortality beckons.

US Open trio tune up at Hanbury

Golf

By Andy Farrell
at Hanbury Manor

HANBURY MANOR is one of the more historic settings on the European tour. The estate, then named "Poles", was mentioned in the Domesday Book, while for most of the 20th century the house was used as a boarding school run by a Jesuit order of nuns. It is, however, in its present guise as a luxury hotel and golf club that it has become famous as the venue for Paul Gascoigne's wedding, not to mention his sometime retreats from public view.

Gazza put in an appearance on Monday, but just to show this is not his week Hanbury is playing host to the NCR English Open for the next four days. Cricket's Lord MacLaurin and Ian Botham were among those who got wet in the pro-am yesterday, which was eventually cancelled due to the thunderstorms.

Top of the bill from now on is shared by Colin Montgomerie, Lee Westwood and Darren Clarke. All have won tournaments in the last three weeks. Westwood defeating Clarke by a shot in Hamburg on Monday. Another victory here for any of the three would not only mean they could go top of the money list, but would leave for the US Open in the best of spirits.

The second major of the year is a high priority for Montgomerie but the Scot realises he will not necessarily be the next European to break his duck at the highest level. "Both Lee and Darren have the potential to win the US Open," he said. "They are very confident right now and deservedly so."

Westwood's victory was the fifth for the 25-year-old since last November, while Clarke, winner at The Oxfordshire three weeks ago, is determined to keep pace with his friendly rival. "I don't see any reason why we both can't be up there," Westwood said.

"It's vital to hit it long and straight at the US Open, and if you look at the stats for last week we were both up there in driving distance and accuracy. And we were up there in the putting statistics as well."

They will be put to the test this week as Hanbury is set to provide a hint of what they can expect at the Olympic club in a fortnight's time. "The fairways are narrow and the rough is thick," Clarke said. "At times, you'll just have to take a sand wedge back to the fairway."

Brady and Law both up with the pace

Sailing

By Stuart Alexander

NEW ZEALANDER Gavin Brady was setting the pace on the second, still breezy, day of the Hoya Lyngbying Cup yesterday, with defending champion Chris Law also setting into a speed that should ensure he makes the cut to the top six today.

Brady, who has two Congressional Cup wins under his belt, has been threatening to do well at Britain's only Grade 1 event on the world match racing circuit.

But he was knocked out unexpectedly early in his first two appearances. Third time, he hopes, will not just be lucky, but just reward for a team that includes one of Whitbread's lieutenants, Mark Christensen.

Despite claims the International Sailing Federation is in talks with Volvo about a partnership over the running of the next World Race in 2001, Mel Pyatt, managing director of the Swedish automotive group, which runs Volvo events worldwide, said yesterday: "We are not talking to the ISAF at all. We have never been approached by the ISAF as a stage."

Pyatt made it clear Volvo wished solely to be responsible for the running of the event, for any commercial development, and would retain the television rights it has bought.

Results, Digest, page 31

Haydock

2.00 Serdaal (nb) 3.30 Gift Token
2.30 Captain Logan 4.00 Filling
3.00 DOUBLE SPLENDOR (nap) 4.30 Barranak

GOING: Good. STALLS: 17 - inside; remainder - outside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: High for 5 to 10; Low from 11 to 15 to 20 to 25 to 30 to 40 to 50 to 60 to 70 to 80 to 90 to 100 to 110 to 120 to 130 to 140 to 150 to 160 to 170 to 180 to 190 to 200 to 210 to 220 to 230 to 240 to 250 to 260 to 270 to 280 to 290 to 300 to 310 to 320 to 330 to 340 to 350 to 360 to 370 to 380 to 390 to 400 to 410 to 420 to 430 to 440 to 450 to 460 to 470 to 480 to 490 to 500 to 510 to 520 to 530 to 540 to 550 to 560 to 570 to 580 to 590 to 600 to 610 to 620 to 630 to 640 to 650 to 660 to 670 to 680 to 690 to 700 to 710 to 720 to 730 to 740 to 750 to 760 to 770 to 780 to 790 to 800 to 810 to 820 to 830 to 840 to 850 to 860 to 870 to 880 to 890 to 900 to 910 to 920 to 930 to 940 to 950 to 960 to 970 to 980 to 990 to 1000 to 1010 to 1020 to 1030 to 1040 to 1050 to 1060 to 1070 to 1080 to 1090 to 1100 to 1110 to 1120 to 1130 to 1140 to 1150 to 1160 to 1170 to 1180 to 1190 to 1200 to 1210 to 1220 to 1230 to 1240 to 1250 to 1260 to 1270 to 1280 to 1290 to 1300 to 1310 to 1320 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Gascoigne agent goes on attack

PAUL GASCOIGNE's agent yesterday accused Glenn Hoddle of being "brainwashed" into dropping the midfielder from his World Cup squad. Mel Stein believes Gascoigne has been treated like a "Nazi war criminal" and that by leaving him out of his final 22 for France, England coach has ruined his side's chances.

Stein said: "I think we've dropped the pilot and all we are left with is the Marie Celeste. It has become a ghost ship and I don't think we will do well. I wasn't very sure if we were going to win it even with Paul, but I think we had a real chance of getting to the quarter-finals or semi-finals. We will be lucky to get out of the group now."

Stein added: "OK, so he had a bad game in this meaningless tournament. Name me one player who didn't."

The player's agent also refuted allegations that Gascoigne's admission he was drunk on Saturday night had affected his chances.

He added: "I see a lot in the papers about Paul having pressed another self-destruct button. He has not self-destructed, he has been destroyed. I think this was a deliberate campaign by many people in the media and they've got what they wanted. They haven't destroyed him, though, I think they have destroyed England and I think Glenn Hoddle has been brainwashed by what he's seen and heard in the media as much as

what he's seen and heard from Paul. If you had interviewed me on Sunday or Monday, I might have used stronger language about what my views are on Glenn Hoddle.

"Paul is devastated but once the World Cup is over, once England are eliminated I think he will have got over it. I think it will live with him as a scar forever because everyone has said this is his last World Cup."

"He's got Middlebrough in the Premiership to look forward to. I've spoken to Bryan Robson, who's very concerned for him, and everybody who knows and loves Paul just wants to put their arm around him and give him some comfort."

Stein's comments follow Graeme Le Saux's revelations about the anguish he, Gascoigne, and the rest of the players in the frame for selection, felt in the moments when they discovered once and for all whether they would be included at France 98.

Le Saux said: "Glenn called us to his room individually. It was an unnerving feeling walking along that corridor to his room because you couldn't be 100 per cent certain that you were in. You don't know exactly how a manager is thinking. I'd had a calf injury before the European Cup-Winners' Cup final and hadn't trained for three or four weeks, so I felt that was a black mark against me."

● Ian Wright has agreed to join ITV's team of analysts.

Brazil's goals still flow post Romario

GIOVANNI and Rivaldo scored first-half goals within a minute of each other as Brazil began their post-Romario era with a comfortable 3-0 victory over Andorra in St Ouen, France, yesterday.

Using Bebeto, who played the entire 90 minutes, in place of Romario, Brazil overran the tiny Pyrenean nation in their last international before the World Cup finals.

Giovanni gave Brazil the lead in the 26th minute and Rivaldo scored a minute later to put the four-times and defending world champions in control. Cafu added a third goal in the 53rd minute.

Italy's hopes that Alessandro Del Piero would be ready to shine in France suffered a setback with the striker confessing that he is only half-way to full fitness and will not rush his return from injury.

The Juventus marksman was included in Italy's squad, even though a lingering right thigh strain has kept him away from training sessions for two weeks.

"It's true I feel good, but on a scale from one to 10, right now I am at five," Del Piero said. "It is clear that to play I have to be in good form. I don't want to take risks."

"There is definitely no room for false steps. The World Cup is long; it certainly does not end with the game against Chile."

Del Piero, who scored a career-best 31 goals for Juventus last season, was earmarked to start in attack alongside either Christian Vieri or Fabrizio Ravanelli. He was injured in

the European Cup final defeat by Real Madrid on 20 May.

Croatia, already without several key players, will now have to do without the striker Alen Boksic, because of knee surgery. With fellow forward Igor Cvitanovic dropped by coach Miroslav Djokovic for refusing to follow orders during training, the Croats now have only four strikers.

The Jamaican striker Walter Boyd, who has been criticised by coach Rene Simoes for his poor form and for missing games, has been included in their squad after apologising for his behaviour.

The defender Sinisa Mihajlovic scored in the second half to give Yugoslavia a 1-0 victory over fellow World Cup qualifiers Japan in an evenly balanced warm-up match in Lausanne yesterday.

Hidetoshi Nakata, of Bellmare Hiratsuka, missed two good chances for Japan before Sinisa, who plays for Sampdoria, scored in the 71st minute. There was plenty of action at both ends in the first half, with Yugoslavia looking their most dangerous at corners.

It was Japan's final game against another national side before the finals. Yugoslavia end their preparations against Switzerland in Basel on Saturday.

Yugoslavia, coached by Slobodan Santrac, face the United States, Germany and Iran in France. Japan, under Takeshi Okada, meet Argentina, Croatia and Jamaica. The team have been training behind closed doors at their base in the lakeside town of Nyon.

HOW THE 704 PLAYERS WILL LINE UP IN FRANCE

ARGENTINA

Goalkeepers
1 Carlos Roa (Boca Juniors)
12 German Abarca (River Plate)
17 Pablo Canale (Newell's Old Boys)
Defenders
6 Nestor Senesi (Parana)
2 Roberto Ayala (Rosario)
22 Javier Zanetti (Boca Juniors)
3 Jose Luis Gonzalez (Boca Juniors)
14 Pablo Pizzuti (Rosario)
15 Nelson Ayala (Boca Juniors)
16 Hector Cuesta (Boca Juniors)
17 Diego Simeone (Internacional)
18 Marcelo Zalayeta (Lazio)
19 Juan Sebastian Veron (Sampdoria)
20 Leonardo Paredes (River Plate)
21 Marcelo Gallardo (River Plate)
22 Sergio Bertoni (River Plate)
23 Ariel Ortega (Velez Sarsfield)
24 Gabriel Batistuta (Florentina)
25 Claudio Lopez (Velez Sarsfield)
26 Marcelo Delgado (Puebla)
27 Hernan Crespo (Parana)
28 Abel Balbo (Rosario)
Coach
Daniel Passarella

AUSTRIA

Goalkeepers
1 Michael Konecny (Rapid Vienna)
12 Franz Wohlfahrt (Wiener)
22 Wolfgang Kiechl (Austria Vienna)
Defenders
5 Wolfgang Feistner (Borussia Dortmund)
12 Martin Hiden (Lands End)
13 Walter Klenz (Austria Vienna)
14 Anton Pfister (Austria Vienna)
15 Peter Schuster (Rapid Vienna)
16 Robert Wagner (Austria Vienna)
17 Andreas Herzog (Rapid Vienna)
18 Andreas Herzog (Wolfsberger)
19 Christian Kitzinger (Rapid Vienna)
20 Hannes Raubner (Sturm Graz)
21 Markus Schuster (Sturm Graz)
22 Rainer Krumpholtz (Rapid Vienna)
23 Arnold Wied (Rapid Vienna)
24 Helmut Pfaffenberger (Wolfsberger)
25 Jozsef Vancsics (Sturm Graz)
26 Harald Cerny (TSV 1860 Munich)
27 Mario Hase (Sturm Graz)
28 Anton Polster (Sturm Graz)
29 Florian Annenauer (FC Salzburg)
Coach
Herbert Prohaska

BELGIUM

Goalkeepers
1 Remy Van der Elst (Antwerp)
12 Danny Verbeke (Club Brugge)
22 Philippe Vande Walle (Standard Liege)
Defenders
5 Vital Borkelmans
12 Eric Vermeir (Club Brugge)
13 Remy Van der Elst (Antwerp)
14 Gordon Vidovic (Standard Liege)
15 Eric Van Meer (Lierse)
16 Glen De Boeck (Antwerp)
17 Philippe Clement (Standard Liege)
18 Philippe Clement (Standard Liege)
19 Pierre Van der Elst (Antwerp)
20 Pierre Van der Elst (Antwerp)
21 Nico Van Kerckhove (Lierse)
22 Franky Van der Elst (Club Brugge)
23 Lorenzo Staelens (Club Brugge)
24 Gerrit Verheyen (Club Brugge)
25 Marc Willems (Standard Liege)
26 Luc Olyslager (Antwerp)
Coach
Georges Leekens

BRAZIL

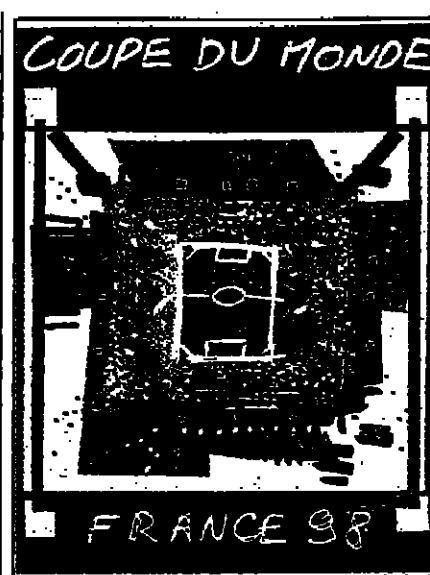
Goalkeepers
1 Taffel (Aston Villa)
12 Carlos Gamarra (Vasco da Gama)
22 Dida (Cruzeiro)
Defenders
5 Cafu (Flamengo)
12 Zé Carlos (São Paulo)
13 Romario (Flamengo)
14 Alex (Flamengo)
15 Junior (Flamengo)
16 Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid)
17 Andre Cruz (Flamengo)
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Coach
Mário Zagallo

BULGARIA

Goalkeepers
1 Zvezdan Jovanovic (Spartak Moscow)
12 Zvezdan Jovanovic (Spartak Moscow)
22 Zvezdan Jovanovic (Spartak Moscow)
Defenders
5 Zvezdan Jovanovic (Spartak Moscow)
12 Zvezdan Jovanovic (Spartak Moscow)
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30 Zvezdan Jovanovic (Spartak Moscow)
Coach
Hristo Bonev

CAMEROON

Goalkeepers
1 Jacques Songo'o (Dynamo Moscow)
12 William Andou (Dynamo Moscow)
22 Alioum Boukar (Dynamo Moscow)
Defenders
5 Robert Song (Dynamo Moscow)
12 Robert Song (Dynamo Moscow)
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28 Robert Song (Dynamo Moscow)
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30 Robert Song (Dynamo Moscow)
Coach
Claude Le Roy



JIM LEIGHTON, the 39-year-old Scotland goalkeeper, is the oldest player taking part in the World Cup finals, while Samuel Eto'o of Cameroon, the only one born in the 1980s, is the youngest. The official squads were published yesterday. Eto'o is just 17 and will be only the fourth 17 year old to appear in the finals if he plays. The next youngest player is England's Michael Owen, who was born in 1979. He will wear No 20 and consequently, at only 18, is the only player out of the 704 whose shirt number is bigger than his age.

Left and right: Two of the official posters promoting the World Cup finals in France



SOUTH KOREA

Goalkeepers
1 Kim Dong-jin (Ulsan Hyundai)
12 Kim Dong-jin (Ulsan Hyundai)
22 Kim Dong-jin (Ulsan Hyundai)
Defenders
5 Kim Dong-jin (Ulsan Hyundai)
12 Kim Dong-jin (Ulsan Hyundai)
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28 Kim Dong-jin (Ulsan Hyundai)
29 Kim Dong-jin (Ulsan Hyundai)
30 Kim Dong-jin (Ulsan Hyundai)
Coach
Choi Ki-hoon

SPAIN

Goalkeepers
1 Andres Zubizarreta (Valencia)
12 Andres Zubizarreta (Valencia)
22 Andres Zubizarreta (Valencia)
Defenders
5 Andres Zubizarreta (Valencia)
12 Andres Zubizarreta (Valencia)
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28 Andres Zubizarreta (Valencia)
29 Andres Zubizarreta (Valencia)
30 Andres Zubizarreta (Valencia)
Coach
Julen Lopetegui

SAUDI ARABIA

Goalkeepers
1 Mohamed Al-Dosari (Al-Nassr)
12 Mohamed Al-Dosari (Al-Nassr)
22 Mohamed Al-Dosari (Al-Nassr)
Defenders
5 Mohamed Al-Dosari (Al-Nassr)
12 Mohamed Al-Dosari (Al-Nassr)
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14 Mohamed Al-Dosari (Al-Nassr)
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27 Mohamed Al-Dosari (Al-Nassr)
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30 Mohamed Al-Dosari (Al-Nassr)
Coach
Carlos Alberto Parreira

TUNISIA

Goalkeepers
1 Adel Chaer (Espérance)
12 Adel Chaer (Espérance)
22 Adel Chaer (Espérance)
Defenders
5 Adel Chaer (Espérance)
12 Adel Chaer (Espérance)
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28 Adel Chaer (Espérance)
29 Adel Chaer (Espérance)
30 Adel Chaer (Espérance)
Coach
Henri Kasperczak

UNITED STATES

Goalkeepers
1 Casey Keller (Leicester City)
12 Casey Keller (Leicester City)
22 Casey Keller (Leicester City)
Defenders
5 Casey Keller (Leicester City)
12 Casey Keller (Leicester City)
13 Casey Keller (Leicester City)
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27 Casey Keller (Leicester City)
28 Casey Keller (Leicester City)
29 Casey Keller (Leicester City)
30 Casey Keller (Leicester City)
Coach
Steve Sampson

YUGOSLAVIA

Goalkeepers
1 Miroslav Pantic (Partizan Belgrade)
12 Miroslav Pantic (Partizan Belgrade)
22 Miroslav Pantic (Partizan Belgrade)
Defenders
5 Miroslav Pantic (Partizan Belgrade)
12 Miroslav Pantic (Partizan Belgrade)
13 Miroslav Pantic (Partizan Belgrade)
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27 Miroslav Pantic (Partizan Belgrade)
28 Miroslav Pantic (Partizan Belgrade)
29 Miroslav Pantic (Partizan Belgrade)
30 Miroslav Pantic (Partizan Belgrade)
Coach
Slobodan Santrac

CHILE

Goalkeepers
1 Nelson Tapia (Universidad Católica)
12 Nelson Tapia (Universidad Católica)
22 Nelson Tapia (Universidad Católica)
Defenders
5 Nelson Tapia (Universidad Católica)
12 Nelson Tapia (Universidad Católica)
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28 Nelson Tapia (Universidad Católica)
29 Nelson Tapia (Universidad Católica)
30 Nelson Tapia (Universidad Católica)
Coach
Nelson Acosta

COLOMBIA

Goalkeepers
1 Oscar Córdoba (Sociedad)
12 Oscar Córdoba (Sociedad)
22 Oscar Córdoba (Sociedad)
Defenders
5 Oscar Córdoba (Sociedad)
12 Oscar Córdoba (Sociedad)
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28 Oscar Córdoba (Sociedad)
29 Oscar Córdoba (Sociedad)
30 Oscar Córdoba (Sociedad)
Coach
Hernán Gómez

CROATIA

Goalkeepers
1 Drazen Petrovic (Croatia Zagreb)
12 Drazen Petrovic (Croatia Zagreb)
22 Drazen Petrovic (Croatia Zagreb)
Defenders
5 Drazen Petrovic (Croatia Zagreb)
12 Drazen Petrovic (Croatia Zagreb)
13 Drazen Petrovic (Croatia Zagreb)
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28 Drazen Petrovic (Croatia Zagreb)
29 Drazen Petrovic (Croatia Zagreb)
30 Drazen Petrovic (Croatia Zagreb)
Coach
Miroslav Djokovic

DENMARK

Goalkeepers
1 Peter Schmeichel (Manchester United)
12 Peter Schmeichel (Manchester United)
22 Peter Schmeichel (Manchester United)
Defenders
5 Peter Schmeichel (Manchester United)
12 Peter Schmeichel (Manchester United)
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27 Peter Schmeichel (Manchester United)
28 Peter Schmeichel (Manchester United)
29 Peter Schmeichel (Manchester United)
30 Peter Schmeichel (Manchester United)
Coach
Bo Johansson

ENGLAND

Goalkeepers
1 David Seaman (Arsenal)
12 David Seaman (Arsenal)
22 David Seaman (Arsenal)
Defenders
5 David Seaman (Arsenal)
12 David Seaman (Arsenal)
13 David Seaman (Arsenal)
14 David Seaman (Arsenal)
15 David Seaman (Arsenal)
16 David Seaman (Arsenal)
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26 David Seaman (Arsenal)
27 David Seaman (Arsenal)
28 David Seaman (Arsenal)
29 David Seaman (Arsenal)
30 David Seaman (Arsenal)
Coach
Glenn Hoddle

FRANCE

Goalkeepers
1 Fabien Barthez (Monaco)
12 Fabien Barthez (Monaco)
22 Fabien Barthez (Monaco)
Defenders
5 Fabien Barthez (Monaco)
12 Fabien Barthez (Monaco)
13 Fabien Barthez (Monaco)
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29 Fabien Barthez (Monaco)
30 Fabien Barthez (Monaco)
Coach
Alain Giresse

GERMANY

Goalkeepers
1 Oliver Kahn (Bayern Munich)
12 Oliver Kahn (Bayern Munich)
22 Oliver Kahn (Bayern Munich)
Defenders
5 Oliver Kahn (Bayern Munich)
12 Oliver Kahn (Bayern Munich)
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29 Oliver Kahn (Bayern Munich)
30 Oliver Kahn (Bayern Munich)
Coach
Berti Vogts

IRAN

Goalkeepers
1 Alireza Beiranvand (Persepolis)
12 Alireza Beiranvand (Persepolis)
22 Alireza Beiranvand (Persepolis)
Defenders
5 Alireza Beiranvand (Persepolis)
12 Alireza Beiranvand (Persepolis)
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29 Alireza Beiranvand (Persepolis)
30 Alireza Beiranvand (Persepolis)
Coach
Jalil Talebi

ITALY

Goalkeepers
1 Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus)
12 Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus)
22 Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus)
Defenders
5 Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus)
12 Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus)
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28 Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus)
29 Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus)
30 Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus)
Coach
Claudio Ranieri

JAMAICA

Goalkeepers
1 Warren Bratt (Vieux-Genève)
12 Warren Bratt (Vieux-Genève)
22 Warren Bratt (Vieux-Genève)
Defenders
5 Warren Bratt (Vieux-Genève)
12 Warren Bratt (Vieux-Genève)
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29 Warren Bratt (Vieux-Genève)
30 Warren Bratt (Vieux-Genève)
Coach
Steve Simoes

JAPAN

Goalkeepers
1 Yasuyuki Kawaguchi (Marinos)
12 Yasuyuki Kawaguchi (Marinos)
22 Yasuyuki Kawaguchi (Marinos)
Defenders
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28 Yasuyuki Kawaguchi (Marinos)
29 Yasuyuki Kawaguchi (Marinos)
30 Yasuyuki Kawaguchi (Marinos)
Coach
Takashi Okada

MEXICO

Goalkeepers
1 Jorge Campos (UNAM Pumas)
12 Jorge Campos (UNAM Pumas)
22 Jorge Campos (UNAM Pumas)
Defenders
5 Jorge Campos (UNAM Pumas)
12 Jorge Campos (UNAM Pumas)
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26 Jorge Campos (UNAM Pumas)
27 Jorge Campos (UNAM Pumas)
28 Jorge Campos (UNAM Pumas)
29 Jorge Campos (UNAM Pumas)
30 Jorge Campos (UNAM Pumas)
Coach
Miguel Laguarda

MOROCCO

Goalkeepers
1 Abdelhak El Baz (FAR Rabat)
12 Abdelhak El Baz (FAR Rabat)
22 Abdelhak El Baz (FAR Rabat)
Defenders
5 Abdelhak El Baz (FAR Rabat)
12 Abdelhak El Baz (FAR Rabat)
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30 Abdelhak El Baz (FAR Rabat)
Coach
Henri Michel

Sky's no limit as Scottish bag £45m for elite

Football

By Clive White

THE NEW Scottish Premiership has hit the jackpot with a £45m four-year deal with Sky which will involve the screening of 30 live matches a year on Sunday evenings from next season after the Football League and English Premiership matches have finished.

The contract represents

something like a seven-fold increase on the deal done by the Scottish League, which was worth £12m and was for League, Scottish Cup and Coca-Cola Cup ties. The new deal embraces only league games and, with cup ties taken into account as well, the total value to Scottish football is probably between £80 and £85m.

The Premiership games, which will kick off at 6.05pm, will include three Old Firm

matches a season. The League's acting chief executive, Robert Wilson, confirmed that each of the new top-10 clubs will enjoy at least one visit from the Sky cameras each season.

Far from affecting attendances it is believed that it might actually enhance them. The Scots have been impressed with Sky's promotional and marketing ability south of the border and are hoping that increases in attendances in the

English Premiership will be replicated in Scotland.

The deal comes a week after Radio Five Live concluded a new £11.5m deal with the Premier League for three seasons, which also compares most favourably with the previous agreement which was worth just £500,000. The BBC, who have lost out recently on FA Cup coverage, Formula One motor racing and one-day cricket, could ill-afford another

loss. Talk Radio had expressed an interest in taking over when Five Live's current deal ended next year.

Five Live's audiences have increased substantially in the last year, hitting an all-time high of 5.6 million last month and earlier this year they won the Sony Station of the Year award.

The English Premier League, which is now in the second year of a £670m four-year contract with Sky, last week

turned down the satellite company's proposal to conduct a pay-per-view experiment next season.

It was concerned about the reaction of supporters to shifting still more matches to Sunday. They also believe that Sky's initiative was fired by a wish to bring in digital television rather than for the good of the game.

With Five Live's deal now in sync with Sky's for the first time,

both contracts expiring in 2001, it means that should the League eventually want to go their own way and introduce digital TV and radio themselves in three years' time there will be a nice clean break from their current partners.

Gerard Houllier last night confirmed he is involved in talks with Sheffield Wednesday about the vacant manager's job, but he added that his services are in demand. The former French national coach

holds a high-profile position within the French Football Association, similar to that of the FA's technical director, Howard Wilkinson, but he has indicated that he wants to return to club management after the World Cup finals.

Sheffield United yesterday interviewed the Arsenal midfielder and former England international David Platt about their managerial vacancy. World Cup squads, page 30

Stewart seeks staying power

Cricket

By Derek Pringle
at Edgbaston

THE build-up to the first Test of a summer series is always a predictable affair. Long before the Tories coined the slogan "New Labour - New Dangers", successive England captains were trotting out the "new season - new optimism" line that followed the inevitable series defeat abroad.

This time England have a new captain to put spin on the well-worn phrase and yesterday Alec Stewart was fidgeting them out like Shane Warne in an attempt to explain why England's fortunes might be different under him.

So far the Stewart script has been unerringly faithful to the original, with soundbites such as: "If we play to our potential" and "As long as we bring more consistency to our game", etc etc. Indeed, you sense that Stewart has been so inundated with tired old clichés throughout his career that he has even begun to believe them.

"I've spoken to all the players, either individually or in pairs," said Stewart, after a rain-interrupted practice at Edgbaston. "I've told them what I expect of them and what

England expects of them, which is to express themselves as they would do for their country."

Normally, this would count as good common sense, except that England players have tended to play that way all along, only to be tripped up by their Test opponents because of the weak nature of county cricket. What England need to find is the staying power necessary to compete against focused adversaries over a five-match series.

New captains are always under pressure to assert themselves and Stewart, though neither shy or retiring, is no different. Unsurprisingly, he has already made his mark by insisting that the England lions and coronet, placed for some reason above

the heart for the one-day series, were put back in the middle of the sweater where they belong. Taking on authority so early is a bold start and he will need to continue it on the field if England are to compete this summer. Australia apart, South Africa are cricket's most tenacious competitors, though in some ways their instinct for defence when under pressure mirrors England's.

"I hope it is hard, tough cricket," Stewart said. "It's the way international cricket should be.



Mark Butcher (foreground) and his England captain, Alec Stewart, make final preparations for the first Test in the nets at Edgbaston yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

It's a competitive place. I know people are always worried about players overstepping the mark, but my main concern has always been respect for the game."

On the field, South Africa risk little, relying mainly on incisive spells from Allan Donald and Shaun Pollock to protect totals often cobbled together by their lengthy, but not stellar batting order.

The cricket ought to be intense, particularly during the opening exchanges when both sides will be working to gain that

crucial early momentum. Having played here many times as Warwickshire's overseas players, Donald and Pollock will feel at home, although the pitch, according to Dennis Amies, the Warwickshire secretary, "is not one they will recognise."

Over the past few years, Edgbaston has produced some fickle surfaces for Tests. In 1995, the one used against the West Indies not only left England beaten before lunch on the third day, but several batsmen nursing bruised chests and broken fingers.

"It looks flat, evenly grassed and a touch damp," said Stewart, who admitted he would have probably bowled first had the match started yesterday and not this morning. Mind you, with the entire square spending most of yesterday under five acres of Brumbrella, change will be minimal and Stewart's first toss in England could well be a vital one.

The uncertainty over the pitch's final appearance means that England will delay naming their 11 until this morning. With good weather forecast

over the next few days, they dare not drop their only spinner and it will probably be between Dominic Cork and Dean Headley for the last bowling place.

Likewise, South Africa will decide between Lance Klusener and Brian McMillan, with Jonty Rhodes' recent run binge against Gloucestershire making sure of his berth in the middle-order.

It is, with his keeping duties bound to tire him, where Stewart has decided to bat as well, though he will start at four in

this Test, with Nasser Hussain filling the troublesome No 3 spot behind the openers, Mike Atherton and Mark Butcher.

Asked whether, by keeping wicket, captaining, and batting in the top four, he was biting off more than he could chew? Stewart replied that he "liked challenges".

Just as well, because his biggest challenge is to get his team to assert themselves as much as their captain clearly intends to do. If he can, the old clichés can be made redundant

and that oft-used word "optimism", at least when applied to England's cricketers, will cease to have a hollow ring.

ENGLAND (from): A Stewart (capt & vice), M Atherton (Lancs), M Butcher (Sussex), M Hussain (Essex), G Thompson (Surrey), M Ramprasad (Middlesex), D Cork (Durham), M Eastman (Kent), R Croft (Gloucestershire), D Gough (Northants), A Fraser (Worcestershire), D Headley (Kent). SOUTH AFRICA (from): W Coetzee (capt & vice), M Boucher (Ipswich), G Labuschagne (Glamorgan), J Kallis, D Ollmar, J Rhodes, S Pollock, L Klusener, A Donald, P Adams, B Illingworth, D Ganga, R Tiffin (Zim) and D Shepherd (Ipswich). TV umpire: J Hampshire (Eng). Match referee: J Burt (Pak).

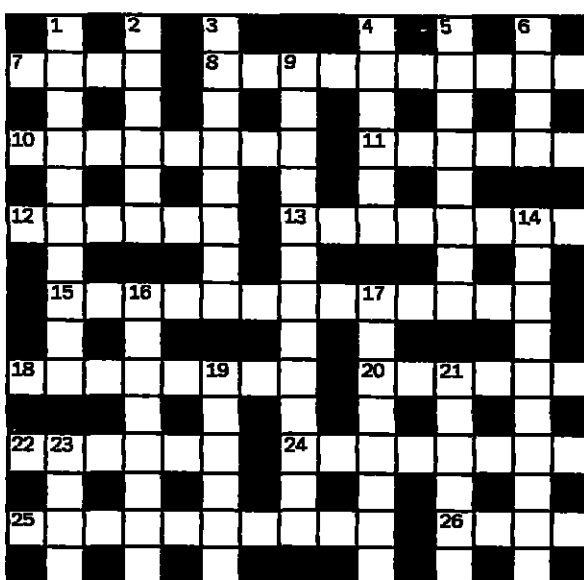
County match reports, scoreboard, page 28

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3628 Thursday 4 June

By Miss

Wednesday's solutions



ACROSS
7 Fiddle with bouncing old cheque (4)
8 Taking measure in and waffling (10)
10 Want support, grasping handle (8)
11 Judge is to sum up (6)
12 French sauce, mostly bitter (6)
13 It's well hooked, as far as bowler's concerned (8)
15 Not the mark of stable companions (13)
18 Muggins gets round with cash at end of bar (8)
20 Diversified art of a leading figure (6)
22 Treated to wallop, officer dropped (6)
24 Contributions to a comfortable retirement? (8)

DOWN
1 One cause of many a hold-up (10)
2 Pen vocal religious piece (6)
3 Far on in Lent? (8)
4 Private school - Queen's English needed for entry (6)
5 Is it conspicuous by absence during informal bite? (5,3)
6 Reverse some unsound opinion (4)
9 One new pipe I nearly bust - it's renewable (13)
14 Overcritical and cutting about Italian priest (3-7)
16 Outlet for rising water, lake flooding weed (8)
17 Notes strain, reportedly in fearful state (8)
19 Captivate with female on organ (6)
21 Shifts last of pegs and guys (6)
23 Pretty good love letter (4)

Pioline presses on as Kuerten collects fine

Tennis

By John Roberts
in Paris

HAPPY but weary, Cedric Pioline is relieved to be able to take a day's rest today while French tennis followers clear their throats in anticipation of a weekend of cheering his coronation as the first home champion since Yannick Noah in 1983.

Pioline appeared close to sinking into the clay yesterday before summoning the will to win his second consecutive five-set match in advancing to the French Open semi-finals. The local favourite knows that he cannot afford to offer Spain's Alex Corretja as many chances as he gave the gifted but erratic Moroccan, Hicham Arazi, yesterday.

Arazi, who started the match as France's second favourite, having lived in the country since his family moved from Casablanca when he was two years old, was able to convert only four of 21 break points and held two set points before losing the third set. Pioline prevailed, 3-6, 6-2, 7-6, 4-6, 6-3, after three hours and 42 minutes.

Having been unsuccessful in two Grand Slam finals against Pete Sampras, at Wimbledon and the United States Open, Pioline, who will be 29 in 12 days' time, is determined to match the persistence of Petr Korda, who won his first major title at 30 at the Australian Open in January.

Henri Leconte, in 1992, was

the last French semi-finalist. Leconte was also the last finalist, losing to Sweden's Mats Wilander in 1988.

Corretja, who could turn Sunday's final into a fiesta against one of his compatriots, Carlos Moya or Felix Mantilla, overcame Filip Dewulf, of Belgium, in yesterday's other quarter-final, 7-5, 6-4, 6-3.

Gustavo Kuerten, the deposed champion, was fined \$7,000 (£4,300) yesterday after being disqualified from the men's doubles on Tuesday night for throwing his racket, which came close to hitting the umpire, Bruno Ruben, and landed in the crowd. Nobody was injured.

Kuerten's arrival at the airport on Tuesday night coincided with the injured Romario's departure from the World Cup, so his compatriot was able to make a public apology via Brazilian television, radio and newspapers.

In a statement at the tournament, he said: "I'm so sorry for what happened and I regret what I did. We were playing good tennis, even after the mistakes the umpire made. When we lost that point, on the set point, I tried to relieve my tension by throwing the racket in the direction of my chair. It escaped and went towards the chair umpire."

"In that moment I knew I was going to be disqualified. I know I made a big mistake and that the racket's place is in my hand. I want to make it clear that I never had the intention of hurting anyone."

Martina Hingis hurt herself, if not her prospects of completing a collection of Grand Slam singles titles, by hitting her left shin with her racket while attempting to execute a shot between her legs during yesterday's doubles quarter-finals.

The 17-year-old world No 1, who is due to play Monica Seles in the singles semi-finals today, tried the trick shot on the penultimate point of her doubles victory with Jana Novotna against Coachina Martinez and Patricia Tarabini. "When I saw Tarabini hit a shot between her legs I wanted to try one," said Hingis, who was treated for bruising. "I'm not worried about it. I'm always getting little scratches and bruises from my dog Zorro."

Seles was asked the other day if she intended to dedicate her performance here to her late father and coach, Karolj, who died only 12 days before the start of the championships. "No," she replied, "because my dad believed whenever I stepped on the court it was just for me. I think of him every day."

She will relish today's challenge of playing Hingis, particularly as she was defeated by the Swiss at the same stage last year, 6-7, 7-5, 6-4, and has lost all five of their matches.

"Last time we played here we had a very tough match," Seles said. "Martina is the No 1 player, so you know what she's going to give you. You have to play the best tennis that you can. That's what I will try to do."

Results, Digest, page 31

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